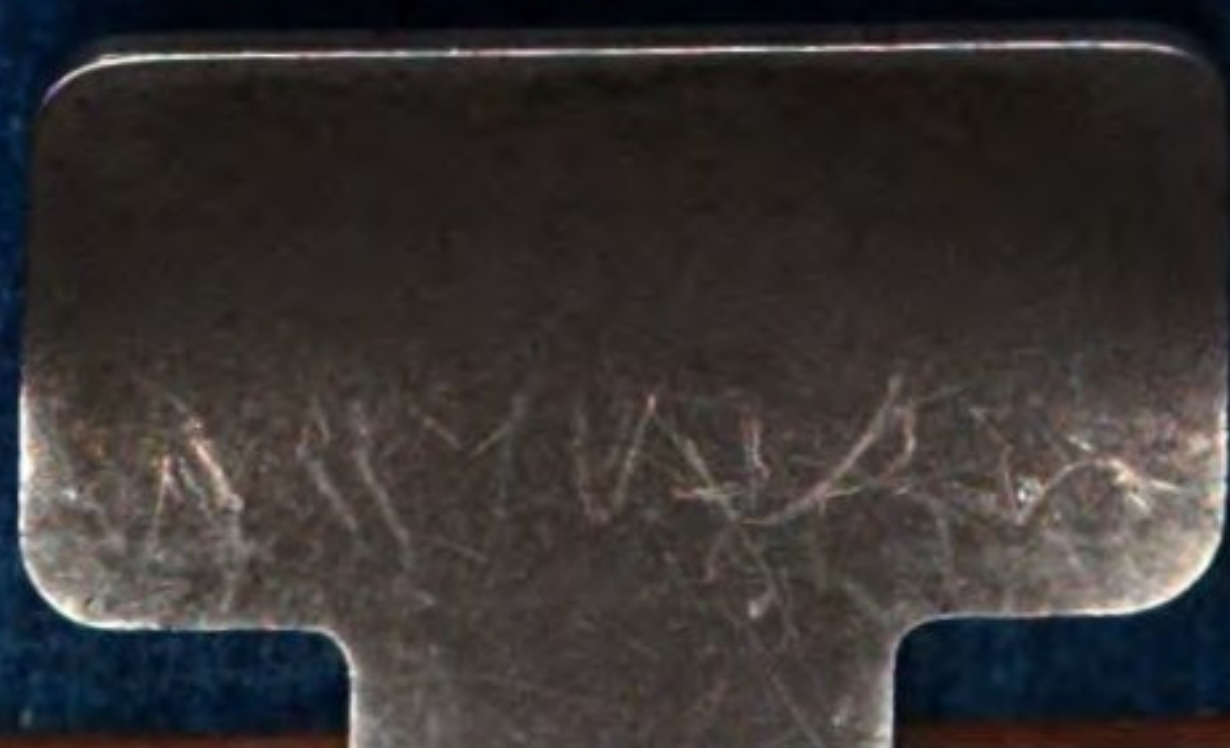






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T H E

BRITISH POETS.

V O L III.

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M, DCC, LXXIII.

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MDCCLXXXIII.

PARADISE REGAIN'D.

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F O U R B O O K S.

To which is added,

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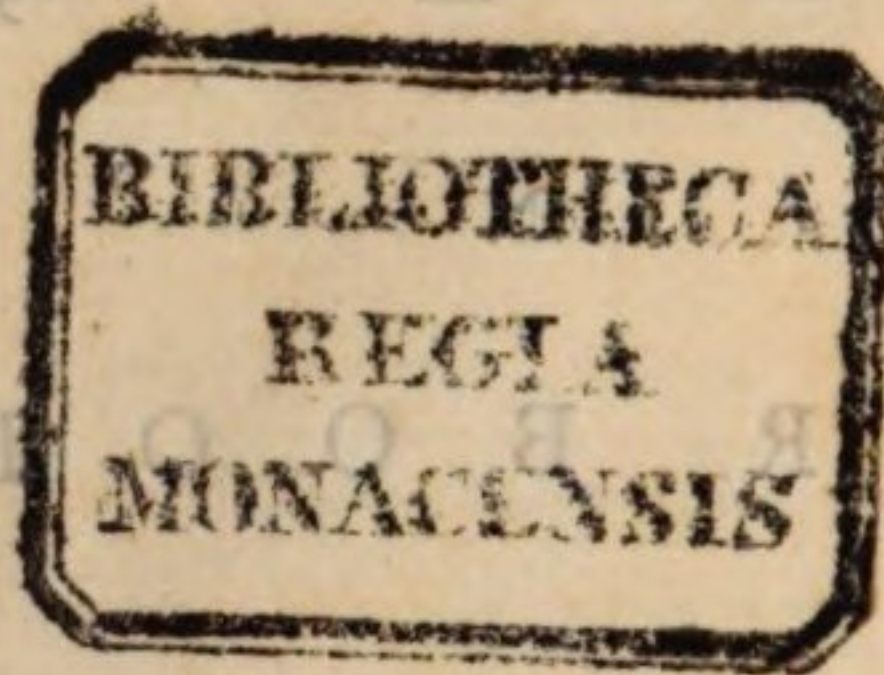
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JOHN MILTON.

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M. DCC. LXXIV.

PARADISE REGAIN'D.

B O O K I.

I Who ere while the happy garden sung,
By one man's disobedience lost, now sing
Recover'd Paradise to all mankind,
By one man's firm obedience fully try'd
Through all temptation, and the tempter foil'd
In all his wiles, defeated and repuls'd,
And Eden rais'd in the waste wilderness.

Thou Sp'rit who ledst this glorious eremite
Into the desert, his victorious field,
Against the spiritual foe, and brought'st him thence
By proof th' undoubted Son of God, inspire,
As thou art wont, my prompted song else mute,
And bear through heighth or depth of nature's bounds
With prosp'rous wing full summ'd to tell of deeds
Above heroic, though in secret done,
And unrecorded left through many an age,
Worthy t' have not remain'd so long unsung.

Now had the great proclaimer, with a voice
More awful than the found of trumpet, cry'd
Repentance, and Heav'n's kingdom nigh at hand
To all baptiz'd : To his great baptism flock'd
With awe the regions round, and with them came
From Nazareth the son of Joseph deem'd

To the flood Jordan, came as then obscure,
Unmark'd, unknown ; but him the Baptist soon
Descry'd, divinely warn'd, and witness bore
As to his worthier, and would have resign'd
To him his heav'nly office, nor was long
His witness unconfirm'd : On him baptiz'd
Heav'n open'd, and in likeness of a dove
The Spirit descended, while the Father's voice
From heav'n pronounc'd him his beloved Son.
That heard the adversary, who roving still
About the world, at that assembly fam'd
Would not be last, and with the voice divine
Nigh thunder-struck, th' exalted man, to whom
Such high attest was giv'n, a while survey'd
With wonder, then with envy fraught, and rage,
Flies to his place, nor rests, but in mid air
To council summons all his mighty peers,
Within thick clouds and dark ten-fold involv'd,
A gloomy consistory; and them amidst
With looks aghast and sad he thus bespake.

O ancient pow'rs of air and this wide world,
For much more willingly I mention air,
This our old conquest, than remember hell
Our hated habitation ; well ye know
How many ages, as the years of men,
This universe we have possess'd, and rul'd
In manner at our will th' affairs of earth,
Since Adam and his facile consort Eve
Lost Paradise deceiv'd by me, though since
With dread attending when that fatal wound
Shall be inflicted by the seed of Eve
Upon my head : Long the decrees of Heav'n

Delay, for longest time to him is short ;
 And now too soon for us the circling hours
 This dreaded time have compast, wherein we
 Must bide the stroke of that long threaten'd wound,
 At least if so we can, and by the head
 Broken be not intended all our power
 To be infring'd, our freedom and our being,
 In this fair empire won of earth and air :
 For this ill news I bring, the woman's seed
 Destin'd to this, is late of woman born :
 His birth to our just fear gave no small cause,
 But his growth now to youth's full flow'r, displaying
 All virtue, grace, and wisdom to atchieve
 Things highest, greatest, multiplies my fear.
 Before him a great prophet, to proclaim
 His coming, is sent harbinger, who all
 Invites, and in the consecrated stream
 Pretends to wash off sin, and fit them so
 Purified to receive him pure, or rather
 To do him honour as their king ; all come,
 And he himself among them was baptis'd,
 Not thence to be more pure, but to receive
 The testimony of heav'n, that who he is
 Thenceforth the nations may not doubt ; I saw
 The prophet do him reverence, on him rising
 Out of the water, heav'n above the clouds
 Unfold her chrystal doors, thence on his head
 A perfect dove descend, whate'er it meant,
 And out of heav'n the sov'reign voice I heard,
 This is my Son belov'd, in him am pleas'd.
 His mother then is mortal, but his sire,
 He who obtains the monarchy of heav'n,

All his sollicitations, and at length
 All his vast force, and drive him back to hell,
 Winning by conquest what the first man lost
 By fallacy surpriz'd. But first I mean
 To exercise him in the wilderness,
 There he shall first lay down the rudiments
 Of his great warfare, ere I send him forth
 To conquer Sin and Death, the two grand foes,
 By humiliation and strong sufferance:
 His weakness shall o'ercome satanic strength,
 And all the world, and mass of sinful flesh;
 That all the angels and ætherial powers,
 They now, and men hereafter may discern,
 From what consummate virtue I have chose
 This perfect man, by merit call'd my Son,
 To earn salvation for the sons of men.

So spake th' eternal Father, and all heav'n
 Admiring stood a space, then into hymns
 Burst forth, and in celestial measures mov'd
 Circling the throne and singing, while the hand
 Sung with the voice, and this the argument.

Victory and triumph to the Son of God,
 Now entering his great duel, not of arms,
 But to vanquish by wisdom hellish wiles.
 The Father knows the Son; therefore secure
 Ventures his filial virtue, though untry'd,
 Against whate'er may tempt, whate'er seduce,
 Allure, or terrify, or undermine.
 Be frustrate all ye stratagems of hell,
 And devilish machinations come to nought.

So they in heav'n their odes and vigils tun'd:
 Mean while the Son of God, who yet some days

Lodg'd in Bethabara where John baptiz'd,
 Musing and much revolving in his breast,
 How best the mighty work he might begin
 Of Saviour to mankind, and which way first
 Publish his god-like office now mature,
 One day forth walk'd alone, the Spirit leading;
 And his deep thoughts, the better to converse
 With solitude, till far from track of men,
 'Thought following thought, and step by step led on,
 He entered now the bordering desert wild,
 And with dark shades and rocks environ'd round,
 His holy meditation thus pursu'd.

O what a multitude of thoughts at once
 Awaken'd in me swarm, while I consider
 What from within I feel myself, and hear,
 What from without comes often to my ears,
 Ill sorting with my present state compar'd.
 When I was yet a child, no childish play
 To me was pleasing, all my mind was set
 Serious to learn and know, and thence to do
 What might be public good; myself I thought
 Born to that end, born to promote all truth,
 All righteous things: Therefore above my years,
 The law of God I read and found it sweet,
 Made it my whole delight, and in it grew
 To such perfection, that ere yet my age
 Had measur'd twice six years, at our great feast
 I went into the temple, there to hear
 The teachers of our law, and to propose
 What might improve my knowledge or their own;
 And was admir'd by all, yet this not all
 To which my spirit aspir'd, victorious deeds.

Flam'd in my heart, heroic acts, one while
 To rescue Israel from the Roman yoke,
 Then to subdue and quell o'er all the earth
 Brute violence and proud tyrannic pow'r,
 Till truth were freed, and equity restor'd :
 Yet held it more humane, more heav'nly, first
 By winning words to conquer willing hearts,
 And make persuasion do the work of fear ;
 At least to try, and teach the erring soul
 Not wilfully misdoing, but unaware
 Misled ; the stubborn only to destroy.
 These growing thoughts my mother soon perceiving
 By words at times cast forth inly rejoic'd,
 And said to me apart, High are thy thoughts,
 O son, but nourish them and let them soar
 To what height sacred virtue and true worth
 Can raise them, though above example high ;
 By matchless deeds express thy matchless fire.
 For know, thou art no son of mortal man,
 Though men esteem thee low of parentage,
 Thy father is th' eternal King who rules
 All heav'n and earth, angels and sons of men ;
 A messenger from God fore-told thy birth
 Conceived in me a virgin, he fore-told
 Thou should'st be great and sit on David's throne,
 And of thy kingdom there shall be no end.
 At thy nativity a glorious quire
 Of angels in the fields of Bethlehem sung
 To Shepherds watching at their folds by night,
 And told them the Messiah now was born,
 Where they might see him, and to thee they came ;
 Directed to the manger where thou lay'st,

For in the inn was left no better room :
A star, not seen before, in heav'n appearing
Guided the wise men thither from the east,
To honour thee with incense, myrrh, and gold,
By whose bright course led on they found the place,
Affirming it thy star new grav'n in heav'n,
By which they knew the King of Israel born.
Just Simeon, and prophetic Anna, warn'd
By vision, found thee in the temple, and spake
Before the altar and the vested priest,
Like things of thee to all that present stood :
This having heard, straight I again revolv'd
The law and prophets, searching what was writ
Concerning the Messiah, to our scribes
Known partly, and soon found of whom they spake
I am ; this chiefly, that my way must lie
Through many a hard assay even to the death,
Ere I the promis'd kingdom can attain,
Or work redemption for mankind, whose sins
Full weight must be transferr'd upon my head.
Yet neither thus dishearten'd or dismay'd,
The time prefix'd I waited, when behold !
The baptist (of whose birth I oft had heard,
Not knew by sight) now come, who was to come
Before Messiah and his way prepare,
I as all others to his baptism came,
Which I believ'd was from above ; but he
Straight knew me, and with loudest voice proclaim'd
Me him (for it was shewn him so from heav'n)
Me him whose harbinger he was ; and first
Refus'd on me his baptism to confer,
As much his greater, and was hardly won :

But as I rose out of the laving stream,
 Heav'n open'd her eternal doors, from whence
 The Spirit descended on me like a dove,
 And last, the sum of all, my Father's voice,
 Audibly heard from heav'n, pronounc'd me his,
 Me his beloved Son, in whom alone
 He was well pleas'd ; by which I knew the time
 Now full, that I no more should live obscure,
 But openly begin, as best becomes
 The authority which I deriv'd from heav'n.
 And now by some strong motion I am led
 Into this wilderness, to what intent
 I learn not yet, perhaps I need not know ;
 For what concerns my knowledge God reveals.

So spake our morning star, then in his rise,
 And looking round on every side beheld
 A pathless desert, dusk, with horrid shades ;
 The way he came not having mark'd, return
 Was difficult, by human steps untrod ;
 And he still on was led, but with such thoughts
 Accompanied of things past and to come
 Lodg'd in his breast, as well might recommend
 Such solitude before choicest society.
 Full forty days he pass'd, whether on hill
 Sometimes, anon in shady vale, each night
 Under the covert of some ancient oak,
 Or cedar, to defend him from the dew,
 Or harbour'd in one cave, is not reveal'd ;
 Nor tasted human food, nor hunger felt
 Till those days ended, hunger'd then at last
 Among wild beasts ; they at his sight grew mild,
 Nor sleeping him nor waking harm'd, his walk

The fiery serpent fled, and noxious worm,
The lion and fierce tiger glar'd aloof.
But now an aged man in rural weeds,
Following, as seem'd, the quest of some stray ewe,
Or wither'd sticks to gather, which might serve
Against a winter's day when winds blow keen,
To warm him wet return'd from field at eve,
He saw approach, who first with curious eye
Perus'd him, then with words thus utter'd spake.

Sir, what ill chance has brought thee to this place
So far from path or road of men, who pass
In troop or caravan, for single none
Durst ever, who return'd, and dropt not here
His carcass pin'd with hunger and with drought.
I ask thee rather, and thee more admire
For that to me thou seem'st the man, whom late
Our new baptizing prophet at the ford
Of Jordan honour'd so, and call'd the Son
Of God; I saw and heard, for we sometimes
Who dwell this wild, constrain'd by want, come forth
To town or village nigh (nighest is far)
Where aught we hear, and curious are to hear,
What happens new; fame also finds us out.

To whom the son of God. Who brought me hither
Will bring me hence; no other guide I seek.

By miracle he may, reply'd the swain;
What other way I see not, for we here
Live on tough roots and stubs, to thirst inur'd
More than the camel, and to drink go far,
Men to much misery and hardship born;
But if thou be the Son of God, command
That out of these hard stones be made thee bread;

So shalt thou save thy self and us relieve
With food, whereof we wretched seldom taste.

He ended, and the son of God reply'd.
Think'st thou such force in bread? is it not written
(For I discern thee other than thou seem'st)
Man lives not by bread only, but each word
Proceeding from the mouth of God, who fed
Our fathers here with manna? In the mount
Moses was forty days, nor ate nor drank,
And forty days Elijah without food
Wand'ring this barren waste; the same I now:
Why dost thou then suggest to me distrust,
Knowing who I am, as I know who thou art?

Whom thus answer'd th' arch-fiend now undisguis'd.
'Tis true, I am that spirit unfortunate,
Who leagu'd with millions more in rash revolt
Kept not my happy station, but was driv'n
With them from bliss to the bottomless deep,
Yet to that hideous place not so confin'd
By rigour unconniving, but that oft
Leaving my dolorous prison I enjoy
Large liberty to round this globe of earth,
Or range in th' air, nor from the heav'n of heav'ns
Hath he excluded my resort sometimes.
I came among the sons of God, when he
Gave up into my hands Uzzean Job
To prove him, and illustrate his high worth;
And when to all his angels he propos'd
To draw the proud King Ahab into fraud,
That he might fall in Ramoth, they demurring,
I undertook that office; and the tongues
Of all his flattering prophets glibb'd with lies.

To his destruction, as I had in charge,
 For what he bids I do : Though I have lost
 Much lustre of my native brightness, lost
 To be belov'd of God, I have not lost
 To love, at least contemplate and admire
 What I see excellent in good, or fair,
 Or virtuous, I should so have lost all sense.
 What can be then less in me than desire
 To see thee, and approach thee whom I know
 Declar'd the Son of God, to hear attent
 Thy wisdom, and behold thy God-like deeds ?
 Men generally think me much a foe
 To all mankind : Why should I ? they to me
 Never did wrong or violence, by them
 I lost not what I lost, rather by them
 I gain'd what I have gain'd, and with them dwell
 Copartner in these regions of the world,
 If not disposer ; lend them oft my aid,
 Oft my advice by presages and signs,
 And answers, oracles, portents, and dreams,
 Whereby they may direct their future life.
 Envy they say excites me, thus to gain
 Companions of my misery and woe.
 At first it may be ; but long since with woe
 Nearer acquainted, now I feel by proof,
 That fellowship in pain divides not smart,
 Nor lightens aught each man's peculiar load ;
 Small consolation then, were man adjoin'd :
 This wounds me most (what can it less) that man,
 Man fall'n shall be restor'd, I never more.

To whom our Saviour sternly thus reply'd :
 Deservedly thou griev'st, compos'd of lies

From the beginning, and in lies wilt end ;
 Who boast'ſt release from hell, and leave to come
 Into the heav'n of heav'ns : Thou com'ſt indeed,
 As a poor miserable captive thrall
 Comes to the place where he before had sat
 Among the prime in splendor, now depos'd,
 Ejected, emptied, gaz'd, unpitied, shunn'd,
 A spectacle of ruin or of scorn
 To all the host of heav'n ; the happy place
 Imports to thee no happiness, no joy,
 Rather inflames thy torment, representing
 Lost blifs, to thee no more communicable,
 So never more in hell than when in heav'n.
 But thou art serviceable to heav'n's King.
 Wilt thou impute t' obedience what thy fear
 Extorts, or pleasure to do ill excites ?
 What but thy malice mov'd thee to misdeem
 Of righteous Job, then cruelly to afflict him
 With all inflictions ? but his patience won.
 The other service was thy chosen task,
 To be a liar in four hundred mouths ;
 For lying is thy sustenance, thy food.
 Yet thou pretend'ſt to truth ; all oracles
 By thee are giv'n, and what confest more true
 Among the nations ? that hath been thy craft,
 By mixing somewhat true to vent more lies.
 But what have been thy answers, what but dark,
 Ambiguous, and with double sense deluding,
 Which they who ask'd have seldom understood,
 And not well understood as good not known ?
 Who ever by consulting at thy shrine
 Return'd the wiser, or the more instruct

To fly or follow what concern'd him most,
 And run not sooner to his fatal snare ?
 For God hath justly giv'n the nations up
 To thy delusions, justly, since they fell
 Idolatrous : But when his purpose is
 Among them to declare his providence
 To thee not known, whence hast thou then thy truth,
 But from him or his angels president
 In ev'ry province, who themselves disdaining
 T' approach thy temple, give thee in command
 What to the smallest tittle thou shalt say
 To thy adorers ? thou with trembling fear,
 Or like a fawning parasite, obey'st ;
 'Then to thyself ascrib'st the truth foretold..
 But this thy glory shall be soon retrench'd ;
 No more shalt thou by oracling abuse
 The Gentiles ; henceforth oracles are ceas'd ;
 And thou no more with pomp and sacrifice
 Shalt be inquir'd at Delphos or else-where,
 At least in vain, for they shall find thee mute.
 God hath now sent his living oracle
 Into the world to teach his final will,
 And sends his Spirit of truth henceforth to dwell
 In pious hearts, an inward oracle
 To all truth requisite for men to know.

So spake our Saviour ; but the subtle fiend,
 Though inly stung with anger and disdain,
 Dissembled, and this answer smooth return'd.

Sharply thou hast insisted on rebuke,
 And urg'd me hard with doings, which not will
 But misery hath wrested from me : Where
 Easily canst thou find one miserable,

And not inforc'd oft-times to part from truth,
If it may stand him more in stead to lye
Say and unsay, feign, flatter, or abjure?
But thou art plac'd above me, thou art lord;
From thee I can and must submit endure
Check or reproof, and glad t' escape so quiet.
Hard are the ways of truth, and rough to walk,
Smooth on the tongue discours'd, pleasing to th' ear,
And tuneable as silvan pipe or song;
What wonder then if I delight to hear
Her dictates from thy mouth? most men admire
Virtue, who follows not her lore: Permit me
To hear thee when I come (since no man comes)
And talk at least, tho' I despair t' attain.
Thy Father, who is holy, wise, and pure,
Suffers the hypocrite or atheous priest
To tread his sacred courts, and minister
About his altar, handling holy things,
Praying or vowing, and vouchsaf'd his voice
To Balaam reprobate, a prophet yet
Inspir'd; disdain not such access to me.

To whom our Saviour with unalter'd brow.
Thy coming thither, though I know thy scope,
I bid not or forbid; do as thou find'st
Permission from above: Thou canst not more.

He added not; and Satan bowing low
His gray dissimulation, disappear'd
Into thin air diffus'd: For now began
Night with her fullen wings to double-shade
The desert; fowls in their clay-nests were couch'd;
And now wild beasts came forth the woods to roam.

PARADISE REGAIN'D.

B O O K II.

MEAN while the new-baptis'd, who yet remain'd
 At Jordan with the Baptist, and had seen
 Him whom they heard so late expressly call'd
 Jesus Messiah Son of God declar'd,
 And on that high authority had believ'd,
 And with him talk'd, and with him lodg'd, I mean
 Andrew and Simon, famous after known,
 With others, though in holy writ not nam'd,
 Now missing him their joy so lately found,
 So lately found, and so abruptly gone,
 Began to doubt, and doubted many days,
 And as the days increas'd, increas'd their doubt :
 Sometimes they thought he might be only shown,
 And for a time caught up to God, as once
 Moses was in the mount, and missing long ;
 And the great Thisbite, who on fiery wheels
 Rode up to heav'n, yet once again to come.
 Therefore as those young prophets then with care
 Sought lost Elijah, so in each place these
 Nigh to Bethabara; in Jericho
 The city of palms, Ænon, and Salem old,
 Machærus, and each town or city wall'd
 On this side the broad lake Genezaret,

Or in Perea; but return'd in vain.
'Then on the bank of Jordan, by a creek,
Where winds with reeds and osiers whisp'ring play,
Plain fisher-men, no greater men them call,
Close in a cottage low together got,
Their unexpected loss and complaints out-breath'd
Alas, from what high hope to what relapse
Unlook'd-for are we fall'n! our eyes beheld
Messiah certainly now come, so long
Expected of our fathers; we have heard
His words, his wisdom full of grace and truth;
Now, now, for sure deliverance is at hand,
'The kingdom shall to Israel be restor'd:
'Thus we rejoic'd, but soon our joy is turn'd
Into perplexity and new amaze:
For whither is he gone, what accident
Hath rapt him from us? will he now retire
After appearance, and again prolong
Our expectation? God of Israel,
Send thy Messiah forth, the time is come;
Behold the kings of th' earth how they oppress
Thy chosen, to what height their pow'r unjust
They have exalted, and behind them cast
All fear of thee; arise and vindicate
Thy glory, free thy people from their yoke.
But let us wait; thus far he hath perform'd,
Sent his Anointed, and to us reveal'd him,
By his great Prophet, pointed at and shown
In public, and with him we have convers'd;
Let us be glad of this, and all our fears
Lay on his providence; he will not fail,
Nor will withdraw him now, nor will recal,

Mock us with his blest sight, then snatch him hence :
Soon we shall see our hope, our joy return.

Thus they out of their complaints new hope resume
To find whom at the first they found unfought :
But to his mother Mary, when she saw
Others return'd from baptism, not her son,
Nor left at Jordan, tidings of him none ;
Within her breast, though calm, her breast, though pure,
Motherly cares and fears got head, and rais'd
Some troubled thoughts, which she in sighs thus clad.

O what avails me now that honour high
To have conceiv'd of God, or that salute,
Hail highly favour'd, among women blest !
While I to sorrows am no less advanc'd,
And fears as eminent, above the lot
Of other women, by the birth I bore ;
In such a season born when scarce a shed
Could be obtain'd to shelter him or me
From the bleak air ; a stable was our warmth,
A manger his, yet soon enforc'd to fly
Thence into Egypt, till the murd'rous king
Were dead, who sought his life, and missing fill'd
With infant-blood the streets of Bethlehem ;
From Egypt home return'd, in Nazareth
Hath been our dwelling many years, his life
Private, unactive, calm, contemplative,
Little suspicious to any king ; but now
Full grown to man, acknowledg'd, as I hear,
By John the baptist, and in public shown,
Son own'd from heav'n by his Father's voice :
I look'd for some great change ; to honour? no,
But trouble, as old Simeon plain foretold,

That to the fall and rising he should be
 Of many in Israel, and to a sign
 Spoken against, that through my very soul
 A sword shall pierce; this is my favour'd lot,
 My exaltation to afflictions high;
 Afflicted I may be, it seems, and blest;
 I will not argue that, nor will repine.
 But where delays he now? some great intent
 Conceals him: When twelve years he scarce had seen,
 I lost him, but so found, as well I saw
 He could not lose himself, but went about
 His Father's business; what he meant I mus'd,
 Since understand; much more his absence now
 Thus long to some great purpose he obscures.
 But I to wait with patience am inur'd;
 My heart hath been a store-house long of things
 And sayings laid up, portending strange events.

Thus Mary pond'ring oft, and oft to mind
 Recalling what remarkably had pass'd
 Since first her salutation heard, with thoughts
 Meekly compos'd awaited the fulfilling:
 The while her son tracing the desert wild,
 Sole, but with holiest meditations fed,
 Into himself descended, and at once
 All his great work to come before him set;
 How to begin, how to accomplish best
 His end of being on earth, and mission high.
 For Satan with sly preface to return
 Had left him vacant, and with speed was gone
 Up to the middle region of thick air,
 Where all his potentates in council sat;
 There without sign of boast, or sign of joy,

Sollicitous and blank he thus began.

Princes, heav'n's ancient fons, aetherial thrones,
 Demonian spirits now, from th' element
 Each of his reign allotted, rightlier call'd
 Pow'rs of fire, air, water, and earth beneath,
 So may we hold our place and these mild seats
 Without new trouble; such an enemy
 Is risen to invade us, who no less
 Threatens than our expulsion down to hell;
 I, as I undertook, and with the vote
 Consenting in full frequency was impower'd,
 Have found him, view'd him, tasted him, but find
 Far other labour to be undergone
 Than when I dealt with Adam first of men,
 Though Adam by his wife's allurements fell,
 However to this man inferior far,
 If he be man by mother's side at least,
 With more than human gifts from heav'n adorn'd,
 Perfections absolute, graces divine,
 And amplitude of mind to greatest deeds.
 Therefore I am return'd, lest confidence
 Of my success with Eve in Paradise
 Deceive you to persuasion over-sure
 Of like succeeding here; I summon all
 Rather to be in readiness, with hand
 Or counsel to assist; lest I who erst
 Thought none my equal, now be over-match'd.

So spake th' old serpent doubting, and from all
 With clamour was assur'd their utmost aid
 At his command; when from amidst them rose
 Belial, the dissolute spirit that fell,
 The sensuallest, and after Asmodai

The fleshliest Incubus; and thus advis'd.

Set women in his eye, and in his walk,
Among daughters of men the fairest found;
Many are in each region passing fair
As the noon sky; more like to goddesses
Than mortal creatures, graceful and discreet,
Expert in am'rous arts, enchanting tongues
Persuasive, virgin majesty with mild
And sweet allay'd, yet terrible t' approach,
Skill'd to retire, and in retiring draw
Hearts after them, tangled in amorous nets.
Such object hath the power to soft'n and tame
Severest temper, smooth the rugged'st brow,
Enerve, and with voluptuous hope dissolve,
Draw out with credulous desire, and lead
At will the manliest, resolute'st breast,
As the magnetic hardest iron draws.
Women, when nothing else, beguil'd the heart
Of wisest Solomon, and made him build,
And made him bow to the gods of his wives.

To whom quick answer Satan thus return'd:
Belial, in much uneven scale thou weigh'st
All others by thy self; because of old
Thou thy self doat'dst on womankind, admiring
Their shape, their colour, and attractive grace.
None are, thou think'st, but taken with such toys.
Before the flood thou with thy lusty crew,
False-titled sons of God, roaming the earth,
Cast wanton eyes on the daughters of men,
And coupled with them, and begot a race.
Have we not seen, or by relation heard,
In courts and regal chambers how thou lurk'dst,

In wood or grove by mossy fountain side,
 In valley or green meadow, to way-lay
 Some beauty rare, Calisto, Clymene,
 Daphne, or Semele, Antiopa,
 Or Amymone, Syrinx, many more
 Too long, then lay'st thy scapes on names ador'd,
 Apollo, Neptune, Jupiter, or Pan,
 Satyr, or fawn, or silvan? but these haunts
 Delight not all; among the sons of men,
 How many have with a smile made small account
 Of beauty and her lures, easily scorn'd
 All her assaults, on worthier things intent?
 Remember that Pellean conqueror,
 A youth, how all the beauties of the east
 He slightly view'd, and slightly overpass'd;
 How he firnam'd of Africa dismiss'd
 In his prime youth the fair Iberian maid.
 For Solomon, he liv'd at ease, and full
 Of honour, wealth, high fare, aim'd not beyond
 Higher design than to enjoy his state;
 Thence to the bait of women lay expos'd:
 But he whom we attempt is wiser far
 Than Solomon, of more exalted mind,
 Made and set wholly on th' accomplishment
 Of greatest things; what woman will you find,
 Though of this age the wonder and the fame,
 On whom his leisure will vouchsafe an eye
 Of fond desire? or should she confident,
 As sitting queen ador'd on beauty's throne,
 Descend with all her winning charms begirt
 T' enamour, as the zone of Venus once
 Wrought that effect on Jove, so fables tell;

How would one look from his majestic brow,
 Seated as on the top of virtue's hill,
 Discount'nance her despis'd, and put to rout
 All her array, her female pride deject,
 Or turn to reverent awe? for beauty stands
 In the admiration only of weak minds
 Led captive; cease t' admire, and all her plumes
 Fall flat and shrink into a trivial toy,
 At every sudden flighting quite abash't :
 Therefore with manlier objects we must try
 His constancy, with such as have more shew
 Of worth, of honour, glory, and popular praise,
 Rocks whereon greatest men have ofttest wreck'd ;
 Or that which only seems to satisfy
 Lawful desires of nature, not beyond.
 And now I know he hungers where no food
 Is to be found, in the wide wilderness ;
 The rest commit to me, I shall let pass
 No advantage, and his strength as oft assay.

He ceas'd, and heard their grant in loud acclaim ;
 Then forthwith to him takes a chosen band
 Of spirits likest to himself in guile
 To be at hand, and at his back appear,
 If cause were to unfold some active scene
 Of various persons each to know his part :
 Then to the desert takes with these his flight ;
 Where still from shade to shade the Son of God
 After forty days fasting had remain'd,
 Now hungring first, and to himself thus said :

Where will this end ? four times ten days I've pass'd
 Wand'ring this woody maze, and human food
 Nor tasted, nor had appetite ; that fast

To virtue I impute not, or count part
 Of what I suffer here ; if nature need not,
 Or God support nature without repast
 Though needing, what praise is it to endure ?
 But now I feel I hunger, which declares
 Nature hath need of what she asks ; yet God
 Can satisfy that need some other way,
 Tho' hunger still remain ; so it remain
 Without this body's wasting, I content me,
 And from the sting of famine fear no harm,
 Nor mind it, fed with better thoughts that feed
 Me hungring more to do my Father's will.

It was the hour of night, when thus the Son
 Commun'd in silent walk, then laid him down
 Under the hospitable covert nigh
 Of trees thick interwoven ; there he slept
 And dream'd, as appetite is wont to dream,
 Of meats and drinks, nature's refreshment sweet ;
 Him thought, he by the brook of Cherith stood,
 And saw the ravens with their horny beaks
 Food to Elijah bringing even and morn,
 Tho' rav'nous, taught t' abstain from what they brought.
 He saw the prophet also how he fled
 Into the desert, and how there he slept
 Under a juniper ; then how awak'd,
 He found his supper on the coals prepar'd,
 And by the angel was bid rise and eat,
 And eat the second time after repose,
 The strength whereof suffic'd him forty days ;
 Sometimes that with Elijah he partook,
 Or as a guest with Daniel at his pulse.
 Thus wore out night, and now the herald lark

Left his ground-nest, high-tow'ring to descry
 The morn's approach, and greet her with his song :
 As lightly from his grassy couch up rose
 Our Saviour, and found all was but a dream ;
 Fast he went to sleep, and fast he wak'd.
 Up to a hill anon his steps he rear'd,
 From whose high top to ken the prospect round,
 If cottage were in view, sheep-cote or herd ;
 But cottage, herd, or sheep-cote none he saw,
 Only in a bottom saw a pleasant grove,
 With chaunt of tuneful birds resounding loud ;
 Thither he bent his way, determin'd there
 To rest at noon, and enter'd soon the shade
 High roost, and walks beneath, and alleys brown,
 That open'd in the midst a woody scene ;
 Nature's own work it seem'd (nature taught art)
 And to a superstitious eye the haunt
 Of wood-gods and wood-nymphs ; he view'd it round,
 When suddenly a man before him stood,
 (Not rustic as before, but seemlier clad,
 As one in city, or court, or palace-bred)
 And with fair speech these words to him address'd.

With granted leave officious I return,
 But much more wonder that the Son of God
 In this wild solitude so long should bide,
 Of all things destitute, and, well I know,
 Not without hunger. Others of some note,
 As story tells, have trod this wilderness ;
 The fugitive bond-woman with her son,
 Out-cast Nebaioth, yet found here relief
 By a providing angel ; all the race
 Of Israel here had famish'd, had not God

Rain'd from heav'n manna ; and that prophet bold
 Native of Thebez wand'ring here was fed
 Twice by a voice inviting him to eat ;
 Of thee these forty days none hath regard,
 Forty and more deserted here indeed,

To whom thus Jesus : What conclud'st thou hence ?
 They all had need, I as thou see'st have none.

How hast thou hunger then ? Satan reply'd.
 Tell me, if food were now before thee set,
 Would'st thou not eat ? Thereafter as I like
 The giver, answer'd Jesus. Why should that
 Cause thy refusal, said the subtle fiend ?
 Hast thou not right to all created things ?
 Owe not all creatures by just right to thee
 Duty and service, not to stay till bid,
 But tender all their pow'r ? nor mention I
 Meats by the law unclean, nor offer'd first
 To idols, those young Daniel could refuse ;
 Nor proffer'd by an enemy, though who
 Would scruple that, with want oppress'd ? Behold
 Nature asham'd, or, better to express,
 Troubl'd that thou should'st hunger, hath purvey'd
 From all the elements her choicest store
 To treat thee as befits, and as her lord,
 With honour, only deign to sit and eat.

He spake no dream ; for as his words had end,
 Our Saviour lifting up his eyes, beheld
 In ample space under the broadest shade
 A table richly spread, in regal mode,
 With dishes pil'd, and meats of noblest sort
 And favour, beasts of chace, or fowl of game,
 In pastry-built, or from the spit, or boil'd,

Gris-amber-stream'd ; all fish from sea or shore,
 Freshet, or purling brook, of shell or fin,
 And exquisitest name, for which was drain'd
 Pontus and Lucrine bay, and Afric coast.
 Alas, how simple, to these cates compar'd,
 Was that crude apple that diverted Eve !
 And at a stately side-board by the wine
 That fragrant smell diffus'd, in order stood
 Tall stripling youths, rich clad, of fairer hue
 Than Ganymed or Hylas ; distant more
 Under the trees now tripp'd, now solemn stood
 Nymphs of Diana's train, and Naiades
 With fruits and flow'rs from Amalthea's horn,
 And ladies of th' Hesperides, that seem'd
 Fairer than feign'd of old, or fabl'd since
 Of Fairey damsels met in forest wide
 By knights of Logres, or of Lyones,
 Lancelot, or Pelleas, or Pellenore.
 And all the while harmonious airs were heard
 Of chiming strings, or charming pipes ; and winds
 Of gentlest gale Arabian odours fann'd
 From their soft wings, and Flora's earliest smells.
 Such was the splendor ; and the tempter now
 His invitation earnestly renew'd.

What doubts the Son of God to sit and eat ?
 These are not fruits forbidden ; no interdict
 Defends the touching of these viands pure ;
 Their taste no knowledge works at least of evil,
 But life preserves, destroys life's enemy,
 Hunger, with sweet restorative delight.
 All these are sp'rits of air, and woods, and springs,
 Thy gentle ministers, who come to pay

Thee homage, and acknowledge thee their Lord :
 What doubt'st thou Son of God ? sit down and eat.

To whom thus Jesus temp'rately reply'd :
 Said'st thou not, that to all things I had right ?
 And who withholds my pow'r that right to use ?
 Shall I receive by gift, what of my own,
 When and where likes me best, I can command ?
 I can at will, doubt not, as soon as thou,
 Command a table in this wilderness,
 And call swift flights of angels ministrant
 Array'd in glory on my cup t' attend :
 Why should'st thou then obtrude this diligence
 In vain, where no acceptance it can find ?
 And with my hunger what hast thou to do ?
 Thy pompous delicacies I contemn,
 And count thy specious gifts no gifts, but guiles.

To whom thus answer'd Satan malecontent :
 That I have also pow'r to give, thou seest ;
 If of that pow'r I bring thee voluntary
 What I might have bestowed on whom I pleas'd,
 And rather opportunely in this place
 Chose to impart to thy apparent need ;
 Why shouldst thou not accept it ? but I see
 What I can do or offer is suspect ;
 Of these things others quickly will dispose, [that
 Whose pains have earn'd the far-fetch'd spoil. With
 Both table and provision vanish'd quite
 With sound of harpies wings, and talons heard ;
 Only the importune tempter still remain'd,
 And with these words his temptation pursu'd.

By hunger, that each other creature tames,
 Thou art not to be harm'd, therefore not mov'd ;

Thy temperance invincible besides,
 For no allurements yields to appetite,
 And all thy heart is set on high designs,
 High actions; but wherewith to be achiev'd?
 Great acts require great means of enterprise;
 Thou art unknown, unfriended, low of birth,
 A carpenter thy father known, thyself
 Bred up in poverty and straits at home,
 Lost in a desert here, and hunger-bit:
 Which way or from what hope dost thou aspire
 To greatness? whence authority deriv'st?
 What followers, what retinue canst thou gain,
 Or at thy heels the dizzy multitude,
 Longer than thou canst feed them on thy cost?
 Money brings honour, friends, conquest, and realms.
 What rais'd Antipater the Edomite,
 And his son Herod plac'd on Judah's throne,
 Thy throne, but gold that got him puissant friends?
 Therefore, if at great things thou would'st arrive,
 Get riches first, get wealth, and treasure heap,
 Not difficult, if thou hearken to me:
 Riches are mine, fortune is in my hand;
 They whom I favour, thrive in wealth amain,
 While virtue, valour, wisdom, sit in want.

To whom thus Jesus patiently reply'd:
 Yet wealth without these three is impotent
 To gain dominion, or to keep it gain'd.
 Witness those antient empires of the earth,
 In height of all their flowing wealth dissolv'd:
 But men indued with these, have oft attain'd
 In lowest poverty to highest deeds;
 Gideon and Jephtha, and the shepherd lad,

Whose offspring on the throne of Judah sat
 So many ages, and shall yet regain
 That seat, and reign in Israel without end.
 Among the Heathen, (for throughout the world
 To me is not unknown what hath been done
 Worthy of memorial) canst thou not remember
 Quintius, Fabricius, Curius, Regulus?
 For I esteem those names of men so poor,
 Who could do mighty things, and could contemn
 Riches, though offer'd from the hand of kings.
 And what in me seems wanting, but that I
 May also in this poverty as soon
 Accomplish what they did, perhaps and more?
 Extol not riches then, the toil of fools,
 The wise man's cumbrance, if not snare, more apt
 To slacken virtue, and abate her edge,
 Than prompt her to do aught may merit praise.
 What if with like aversion I reject
 Riches and realms? yet not for that a crown,
 Golden in shew, is but a wreath of thorns,
 Brings dangers, troubles, cares, and sleepless nights
 To him who wears the regal diadem,
 When on his shoulders each man's burden lies:
 For therein stands the office of a king,
 His honour, virtue, merit, and chief praise,
 That for the public all this weight he bears.
 Yet he who reigns within himself, and rules
 Passions, desires, and fears, is more a king;
 Which ev'ry wise and virtuous man attains:
 And who attains not, ill aspires to rule
 Cities of men or headstrong multitudes,
 Subjects himself to anarchy within,

Or lawless passions in him, which he serves.
 But to guide nations in the way of truth
 By saving doctrine, and from error lead
 To know, and knowing worship God aright,
 Is yet more kingly; this attracts the soul,
 Governs the inner man, the nobler part;
 That other o'er the body only reigns,
 And oft by force, which to a gen'rous mind
 So reigning can be no sincere delight.
 Besides, to give a kingdom hath been thought
 Greater and nobler done, and to lay down
 Far more magnanimous, than to assume.
 Riches are needless, then, both for themselves,
 And for thy reason why they should be fought.
 To gain a sceptre, ofttest better mis'd.

The end of the second book.

PARADISE REGAIN'D.

B O O K III.

S O spake the Son of God, and Satan stood
 A while as mute, confounded what to say,
 What to reply, confuted and convinc'd
 Of his weak arguing, and fallacious drift;
 At length collecting all his serpent wiles,
 With soothing words renew'd, him thus accosts.

I see thou know'st what is of use to know,
 What best to say canst say, to do canst do;
 Thy actions to thy words accord, thy words
 To thy large heart give utterance due, thy heart
 Contains of good, wise, just, the perfect shape.
 Should kings and nations, from thy mouth consult,
 Thy counsel would be as the oracle
 Urim and Thummim, those oraculous gems
 On Aaron's breast; or tongue of seers old
 Infallible: Or wert thou sought to deeds
 That might require th' array of war, thy skill
 Of conduct would be such, that all the world
 Could not sustain thy prowess, or subsist
 In battle, though against thy few in arms.
 These god-like virtues wherefore dost thou hide,
 Affecting private life, or more obscure
 In savage wilderness? wherefore deprive

All earth her wonder at thy acts, thyself
 The fame and glory, glory the reward
 That sole excites to high attempts, the flame
 Of most erected spirits, most temper'd pure
 Aetherial, who all pleasures else despise,
 All treasures and all gain esteem as dross,
 And dignities and pow'rs all but the highest ?
 Thy years are ripe, and over-ripe ; the son
 Of Macedonian Philip had ere these
 Won Asia, and the throne of Cyrus held
 At his dispose ; young Scipio had brought down
 The Carthaginian pride, young Pompey quell'd
 The Pontic king, and in triumph had rode.
 Yet years, and to ripe years judgment mature,
 Quench not the thirst of glory, but augment.
 Great Julius, whom now all the world admires,
 The more he grew in years, the more inflam'd
 With glory, wept that he had liv'd so long
 Inglorious : But thou yet art not too late.

To whom our Saviour calmly thus reply'd.
 'Thou neither dost persuade me to seek wealth
 For empire's sake, nor empire to affect
 For glory's sake, by all thy argument.
 For what is glory but the blaze of fame,
 The people's praise, if always praise unmix'd ?
 And what the people but a herd confus'd,
 A miscellaneous rabble, who extol
 Things vulgar, and, well weigh'd, scarce worth the praise ?
 They praise, and they admire they know not what,
 And know not whom, but as one leads the other ;
 And what delight to be by such extoll'd,
 To live upon their tongues and be their talk,

Of whom to be despis'd were no small praise ?
 His lot who dares be singularly good.
 Th' intelligent among them and the wise
 Are few, and glory scarce of few is rais'd.
 This is true glory and renown, when God
 Looking on th' earth, with approbation marks
 The just man, and divulges him through heav'n
 To all his angels, who with true applause
 Recount his praises : Thus he did to Job,
 When to extend his fame through heav'n and earth,
 As thou to thy reproach may'st well remember,
 He ask'd thee, Hast thou seen my servant Job ?
 Famous he was in heav'n, on earth less known ;
 Where glory is false glory, attributed
 'To things not glorious, men not worthy of fame.
 They err who count it glorious to subdue
 By conquest far and wide, to over-run
 Large countries, and in field great battles win,
 Great cities by assault : What do these worthies,
 But rob and spoil, burn, slaughter, and enslave
 Peaceable nations, neighbouring, or remote,
 Made captive, yet deserving freedom more
 Than those their conquerors, who leave behind
 Nothing but ruin wherefoe'er they rove,
 And all the flourishing works of peace destroy,
 Then swell with pride, and must be titled gods,
 Great benefactors of mankind, deliverers,
 Worshipp'd with temple, priest and sacrifice ;
 One is the son of Jove, of Mars the other ;
 Till conqu'ror Death discover them scarce men,
 Rolling in brutish vices, and deform'd,
 Violent or shameful death their due reward.

But if there be in glory aught of good,
 It may by means far different be attain'd
 Without ambition, war, or violence;
 By deeds of peace, by wisdom eminent,
 By patience, temperance: I mention still
 Him whom thy wrongs, with faintly patience borne,
 Made famous in a land and times obscure;
 Who names not now with honour patient Job?
 Poor Socrates, (who next more memorable?)
 By what he taught and suffer'd for so doing,
 For truth's sake suffering death unjust, lives now
 Equal in fame to proudest conquerors.
 Yet if for fame and glory aught be done,
 Aught suffer'd; if young African for fame
 His wasted country freed from Punic rage,
 The deed becomes unprais'd, the man at least,
 And loses, though but verbal, his reward.
 Shall I seek glory then, as vain men seek,
 Oft not deserv'd? I seek not mine, but his
 Who sent me, and thereby witness whence I am.

To whom the tempter xnmur'ring thus reply'd.
 Think not so slight of glory; therein least
 Resembling thy great Father: He seeks glory,
 And for his glory all things made, all things
 Orders and governs; nor content in heav'n
 By all his angels glorify'd, requires
 Glory from men, from all men good or bad,
 Wise or unwise, no difference, no exemption;
 Above all sacrifice, or hallow'd gift,
 Glory he requires, and glory he receives
 Promiscuous from all nations, Jew, or Greek,
 Or barbarous, nor exception hath declar'd;

From us his foes pronounc'd glory he exacts.

To whom our Saviour fervently reply'd.
 And reason; since his word all things produc'd,
 Though chiefly not for glory as prime end,
 But to shew forth his goodness, and impart
 His good communicable t' ev'ry soul
 Freely; of whom what could he less expect
 Than glory and benediction, that is, thanks,
 The slightest, easiest, readiest recompence
 From them who could return him nothing else,
 And not returning that would likeliest render
 Contempt instead, dishonour, obloquy?
 Hard recompence, unsuitable return
 For so much good, so much beneficence.
 But why should man seek glory? who of his own
 Hath nothing, and to whom nothing belongs
 But condemnation, ignominy, and shame?
 Who for so many benefits receiv'd,
 Turn'd recreant to God, ingrate and false,
 And so of all true good himself despoil'd;
 Yet, sacrilegious, to himself would take
 That which to God alone of right belongs;
 Yet so much bounty is in God, such grace,
 That who advance his glory, not their own,
 Them he himself to glory will advance.

So spake the Son of God: And here again
 Satan had not to answer, but stood struck
 With guilt of his own sin; for he himself
 Insatiable of glory had lost all,
 Yet of another plea bethought him soon.

Of glory, as thou wilt, said he, so deem,
 Worth or not worth the seeking, let it pass:

But to a kingdom thou art born, ordain'd
 To sit upon thy father David's throne ;
 By mother's side thy father ; though thy right
 Be now in powerful hands, that will not part
 Easily from possession won with arms :
 Judaea now and all the promis'd land,
 Reduc'd a province under Roman yoke,
 Obeys Tiberius : Nor is always rul'd
 With temperate sway ; oft have they violated
 The temple, oft the law with foul affronts,
 Abominations rather, as did once
 Antiochus : And think'st thou to regain
 Thy right by sitting still, or thus retiring ?
 So did not Maccabaeus : He indeed
 Retir'd unto the desert, but with arms ;
 And o'er a mighty king so oft prevail'd,
 'That by strong hand his family obtain'd,
 Tho' priests, the crown, and David's throne usurp'd,
 With Modin and her suburbs once content.
 If kingdom move thee not, let move thee zeal
 And duty ; zeal and duty are not slow ;
 But on occasion's forelock watchful wait.
 They themselves rather are occasion best,
 Zeal of thy Father's house, duty to free
 Thy country from her heathen servitude ;
 So shalt thou best fulfil, best verify
 The prophets old, who sung thy endless reign ;
 The happier reign the sooner it begins ;
 Reign then ; what canst thou better do the while ?
 To whom our Saviour answer thus return'd.
 All things are best fulfill'd in their due time,
 And time there is for all things, Truth hath said :

If of my reign prophetic writ hath told,
 That it shall never end, so when begin
 The Father in his purpose hath decreed,
 He in whose hand all times and seasons roll.
 What if he hath decreed that I shall first
 Be try'd in humble state, and things adverse,
 By tribulations, injuries, insults,
 Contempts, and scorns, and snares, and violence,
 Suffering, abstaining, quietly expecting,
 Without distrust or doubt, that he may know
 What I can suffer, how obey ? who best
 Can suffer, best can do ; best reign, who first
 Well hath obey'd ; just trial ere I merit
 My exaltation without change or end.
 But what concerns it thee when I begin
 My everlasting kingdom, why art thou
 Solicitous, what moves thy inquisition ?
 Know'st thou not that my rising is thy fall,
 And my promotion will be thy destruction ?
 To whom the tempter inly rack'd reply'd.
 Let that come when it comes ; all hope is lost
 Of my reception into grace ; what worse ?
 For where no hope is left, is left no fear :
 If there be worse, the expectation more
 Of worse torments me than the feeling can.
 I would be at the worst ; worst is my port,
 My harbour and my ultimate repose,
 The end I would attain, my final good.
 My error was my error, and my crime
 My crime : Whatever for itself condemn'd,
 And will alike be punish'd, whether thou
 Reign or reign not ; though to that gentle brow

Willingly I could fly, and hope thy reign,
From that placid aspect and meek regard,
Rather than aggravate my evil state,
Would stand between me and thy Father's ire
(Whose ire I dread more than the fire of hell)
A shelter, and a kind of shading cool
Interposition, as a summer's cloud.
If I then to the worst that can be haste,
Why move thy feet so slow to what is best
Happiest both to thyself and all the world,
That thou who worthiest art should'st be their king?
Perhaps thou linger'st in deep thoughts detain'd
Of th' enterprise so hazardous and high;
No wonder, for though in thee be united
What of perfection can in man be found,
Or human nature can receive, consider
Thy life hath yet been private, most part spent
At home, scarce view'd the Galilean towns,
And once a-year Jerusalem, few days
Short sojourn; and what thence couldst thou observe?
The world thou hast not seen, much less her glory,
Empires, and monarchs, and their radiant courts,
Best school of best experience, quickest insight
In all things that to greatest actions lead.
The wisest, unexperienc'd, will be ever
Tim'rous and loth, with novice modesty,
(As he who seeking asses found a kingdom)
Irresolute, unhardy, unadvent'rous:
But I will bring thee where thou soon shalt quit
Those rudiments, and see before thine eyes
The monarchies of th' earth, their pomp and state,
Sufficient introduction to inform

Thee, of thyself so apt, in regal arts,
And regal mysteries, that thou may'st know
How best their opposition to withstand.

With that (such pow'r was giv'n him then) he took
The Son of God up to a mountain high.

It was a mountain, at whose verdant feet
A spacious plain, outstretch'd in circuit wide,
Lay pleasant; from his side two rivers flow'd,
Th' one winding, th' other strait, and left between
Fair champain with less rivers intervein'd,
Then meeting join'd their tribute to the sea :
Fertile of corn the glebe, of oil and wine ;
With herds the pastures throng'd, with flocks the hills;
Huge cities and high tow'r'd, that well might seem
The seats of mightiest monarchs, and so large
The prospect was, that here and there was room
For barren desert fountainless and dry.
To this high mountain top the tempter brought
Our Saviour, and new train of words began.

Well have we speeded, and o'er hill and dale,
Forest and field and flood, temples and tow'rs,
Cut shorter many a league ; here thou behold'st
Assyria and her empire's ancient bounds,
Araxes and the Caspian lake, thence on
As far as Indus east, Euphrates west,
And oft beyond ; to south the Persian bay,
And inaccessible th' Arabian drouth :
Here Nineveh, of length within her wall
Several days journey, built by Ninus old,
Of that first golden monarchy the seat,
And seat of Salmanassar, whose success
Israel in long captivity still mourns;

There Babylon, the wonder of all tongues,
 As ancient, but rebuilt by him who twice
 Judah and all thy father David's house
 Led captive, and Jerusalem laid waste,
 Till Cyrus set them free; Persepolis
 His city there thou seest, and Bactra there;
 Ecbatana her structure vast there shews,
 And Hecatompylos her hundred gates;
 There Susa by Choaspes, amber stream,
 The drink of none but kings; of later fame
 Built by Emathian or by Parthian hands,
 The great Seleucia, Nisibis, and there
 Artaxata, Teredon, Ctesiphon,
 Turning with easy eye thou may'st behold.
 All these the Parthian, now some ages past,
 By great Arfaces led, who founded first
 That empire, under his dominion holds,
 From the luxurious kings of Antioch won.
 And just in time thou com'st to have a view
 Of his great pow'r; for now the Parthian king
 In Ctesiphon hath gather'd all his host
 Against the Scythian, whose incursions wild
 Have wasted Sogdiana; to her aid
 He marches now in haste; see, though from far,
 His thousands, in what martial equipage
 They issue forth! steel bows and shafts their arms,
 Of equal dread in flight, or in pursuit;
 All horsemen, in which fight they most excel;
 See how in warlike muster they appear,
 In rhombs and wedges, and half-moons and wings.
 He look'd, and saw what numbers numberless
 The city gates out-pour'd, light-armed troops

In coats of mail and military pride ;
 In mail their horses clad, yet fleet and strong,
 Prancing their riders bore, the flow'r and choice
 Of many provinces from bound to bound ;
 From Arachosia, from Candaor east,
 And Margiana to the Hircanian cliffs
 Of Caucasus, and dark Iberian dales,
 From Atropatia and the neighb'ring plains
 Of Adiabene, Media, and the south
 Of Susiana, to Balsara's haven.
 He saw them in their forms of battel rang'd.
 How quick they wheel'd, and flying behind them shot
 Sharp fleet of arrowy show'rs against the face
 Of their pursuers, and overcame by flight ;
 The field, all iron, cast a gleaming brown :
 Nor wanted clouds of foot, nor on each horn
 Cuirassiers all in steel for standing fight ;
 Chariots or elephants endors'd with towers
 Of archers, nor of lab'ring pioneers
 A multitude with spades and axes arm'd
 To lay hills plain, fell woods, or valleys fill,
 Or where plain was, raise hill, or overlay
 With bridges rivers proud, as with a yoke ;
 Mules after these, camels and dromedaries,
 And waggons fraught with utensils of war.
 Such forces met not, nor so wide a camp,
 When Agrican with all his northern powers
 Besieg'd Albracca, as romances tell,
 The city of Gallaphrone, from whence to win
 The fairest of her sex Angelica
 His daughter, fought by many prowest knights,
 Both Paynim, and the peers of Charlemaine.

Such and so numerous was their chivalry ;
 At sight whereof the fiend yet more presum'd,
 And to our Saviour thus his words renew'd.

That thou may'st know I seek not to engage
 Thy virtue, and not ev'ry way secure
 On no slight grounds thy safety ; hear, and mark
 To what end I have brought thee hither, and shewn
 All this fair fight : Thy kingdom though foretold
 By prophet or by angel, unless thou
 Endeavour, as thy father David did,
 Thou never shalt obtain ; prediction still
 In all things, and all men, supposes means ;
 Without means us'd, what it predicts revokes.
 But say thou wert possess'd of David's throne
 By free consent of all, none opposite,
 Samaritan or Jew ; how could'st thou hope
 Long to enjoy it quiet and secure,
 Between two such inclosing enemies,
 Roman and Parthian ? therefore one of these
 Thou must make sure thy own, the Parthian first,
 By my advice, as nearer, and of late
 Found able by invasion to annoy
 Thy country, and captive lead away her kings
 Antigonus, and old Hyrcanus bound,
 Maugre the Roman : It shall be my task
 To render thee the Parthian at dispose ;
 Chuse which thou wilt by conquest or by league,
 By him thou shalt regain, without him not,
 That which alone can truly reinstall thee
 In David's royal seat, his true successor,
 Deliv'rance of thy brethren, those ten tribes

Whose offspring in his territory yet serve
 In Habor, and among the Medes dispers'd ;
 Ten sons of Jacob, two of Joseph, lost
 Thus long from Israel, serving as of old
 Their fathers in the land of Egypt serv'd,
 This offer sets before thee to deliver.

These if from servitude thou shalt restore
 To their inheritance, then, nor till then,
 Thou on the throne of David in full glory,
 From Egypt to Euphrates, and beyond
 Shall reign, and Rome or Cæsar not need fear.

To whom our Saviour answer'd thus unmov'd.
 Much ostentation vain of fleshly arm,
 And fragile arms, much instrument of war
 Long in preparing, soon to nothing brought,
 Before mine eyes thou hast set ; and in my ear
 Vented much policy, and projects deep
 Of enemies, of aids, battles and leagues,
 Plausible to the world, to me worth naught.
 Means I must use, thou say'st, prediction else
 Will unpredict and fail me of the throne :
 My time I told thee (and that time for thee
 Were better farthest off) is not yet come ;
 When that comes, think not thou to find me slack
 On my part aught endeav'ring, or to need
 Thy politic maxims, or that cumbersome
 Luggage of war there shewn me, argument
 Of human weakness rather than of strength.
 My brethren, as thou call'st them, those ten tribes
 I must deliver, if I mean to reign
 David's true heir, and his full sceptre sway

To just extent over all Israel's sons.
 But whence to thee this zeal, where was it then
 For Israel, or for David, or his throne,
 When thou stood'st up his tempter to the pride
 Of numb'ring Israel, which cost the lives
 Of threescore and ten thousand Israelites
 By three days pestilence? such was thy zeal
 To Israel then, the same that now to me.
 As for those captive tribes, themselves were they
 Who wrought their own captivity, fell off
 From God to worship calves, the dieties
 Of Egypt, Baal next and Ashtaroth,
 And all th' idolatries of heathen round,
 Besides their other worse than heath'nish crimes;
 Nor in the land of their captivity
 Humbled themselves, or penitent besought
 The God of their forefathers; but so dy'd
 Impenitent, and left a race behind
 Like to themselves, distinguishable scarce
 From Gentiles, but by circumcision vain,
 And God with idols in their worship join'd.
 Should I of these the liberty regard,
 Who freed, as to their ancient patrimony,
 Unhumbl'd, unrepentant, unreform'd,
 Headlong would follow; and to their gods perhaps
 Of Bethel and of Dan? no, let them serve
 Their enemies, who serve idols with God.
 Yet he at length, time to himself best known,
 Remembering Abraham, by some wond'rous call
 May bring them back repentant and sincere,
 And at their passing cleave th' Assyrian flood,

While to their native land with joy they haste,
 As the Red Sea and Jordan once he cleft,
 When to the promis'd land their fathers pass'd;
 To his due time and providence I leave them.

So spake Israel's true King, and to the fiend
 Made answer meet, that made void all his wiles.
 So fares it when with truth falshood contends.

The end of the third book.

PARADISE REGAIN'D.

B O O K IV.

PERPLEX'D and troubled at his bad success
 The tempter stood, nor had what to reply,
 Discover'd in his fraud, thrown from his hope
 So oft, and the persuasive rhetoric
 That sleek'd his tongue, and won so much on Eve,
 So little here, nay lost; but Eve was Eve,
 This far his over-match, who self-deceiv'd
 And rash, before-hand had no better weigh'd
 The strength he was to cope with, or his own:
 But as a man who had been matchless held
 In cunning, over-reach'd where least he thought,
 To salve his credit, and for very spight,
 Still will be tempting him who foils him still,
 And never cease, though to his shame the more;
 Or as a swarm of flies in vintage-time,
 About the wine-press where sweet must is pour'd,
 Beat of, returns as oft with humming sound;
 Or surging waves against a solid rock,
 Though all to shivers dash'd, th' assault renew,
 Vain batt'ry, and in froth or bubbles end;
 So Satan, whom repulse upon repulse
 Met ever, and to shameful silence brought,
 Yet gives not o'er though desp'rate of success,

And his vain importunity pursues.

He brought our Saviour to the western side
Of that high mountain, whence he might behold
Another plain, long, but in breadth not wide,
Wash'd by the southern sea, and on the north
To equal length back'd with a ridge of hills,
That screen'd the fruits of th' earth and seats of men
From cold Septentrion blasts, thence in the midst
Divided by a river, of whose banks
On each side an imperial city stood,
With tow'rs and temples proudly elevate
On sev'n small hills, with palaces adorn'd,
Porches and theatres, baths, aqueducts,
Statues and trophies, and triumphal arcs,
Gardens and groves presented to his eyes,
Above the height of mountains interpos'd :
By what strange parallax or optic skill
Of vision multiply'd through air, or glass
Of telescope, were curious to inquire :
And now the tempter thus his silence broke.

The city which thou seest no other deem
Than great and glorious Rome, queen of the earth
So far renown'd, and with the spoils enrich'd
Of nations ; there the capitol thou seest
Above the rest lifting his stately head
On the Tarpeian rock, her citadel
Impregnable ; and there mount Palatine,
Th' imperial palace, compass huge, and high
The structure, skill of noblest architects,
With gilded battlements, conspicuous far,
Turrets and terraces, and glit'ring spires.
Many a fair edifice besides, more like

Houses of God (so well I have dispos'd
 My airy microscope) thou may'st behold
 Outside and inside both, pillars and roofs
 Carv'd work, the hand of fam'd artificers
 In cedar, marble, ivory or gold.
 Thence to the gates cast round thine eye, and see
 What conflux issuing forth, or entring in,
 Pretors, proconsuls to their provinces
 Hast'ning, or on return, in robes of state ;
 Lictors and rods, the ensigns of their pow'r,
 Legions and cohorts, turms of horse and wings :
 Or embassies from regions far remote
 In various habits on the Appian road,
 Or on th' Emilian, some from farthest south,
 Syene, and where the shadow both way falls,
 Meroe Nilotic isle, and more to west,
 The realm of Bocchus to the Black-moor sea ;
 From th' Asian kings and Parthian among these,
 From India and the golden Chersonese,
 And utmost Indian isle Taprobane,
 Dusk faces with white silken turbants wreath'd ;
 From Gallia, Gades, and the British west,
 Germans and Scythians, and Sarmatians north
 Beyond Danubius to the Tauric pool.
 All nations now to Rome obedience pay,
 To Rome's great Emperor, whose wide domain
 In ample territory, wealth and pow'r,
 Civility of manners, arts and arms,
 And long renown, thou justly may'st prefer
 Before the Parthian ; these two thrones except,
 The rest are barb'rous, and scarce worth the sight,
 Shar'd among petty kings too far remov'd ;

These having shown thee, I have shown thee all
 The kingdoms of the world, and all their glory.
 This emp'ror hath no son, and now is old,
 Old and lascivious, and from Rome retir'd
 To Capreae an Island small but strong
 On the Campanian shore, with purpose there
 His horrid lusts in private to enjoy,
 Committing to a wicked favourite
 All public cares, and yet of him suspicious,
 Hated of all, and hating; with what ease
 Indu'd with regal virtues as thou art,
 Appearing, and beginning noble deeds,
 Might'st thou expell this monster from his throne
 Now made a stye, and in his place ascending
 A victor people free from servile yoke?
 And with my help thou may'st; to me the pow'r
 Is giv'n, and by that right I give it thee.
 Aim therefore at no less than all the world,
 Aim at the highest, without the highest attain'd
 Will be for thee no sitting, or not long,
 On Davids throne, be prophesied what will.

To whom the Son of God unmov'd reply'd.
 Nor doth this grandeur and majestic show
 Of luxury, though call'd magnificence,
 More than of arms before, allure mine eye,
 Much less my mind; though thou shouldst add to tell
 Their sumptuous gluttonies, and gorgeous feasts
 On citron tables or Atlantic stone,
 (For I have also heard, perhaps have read)
 Their wines of Setia, Cales, and Falerne,
 Chios and Crete, and how they quaff in gold,
 Crystal and myrrhine cups imboss'd with gems

And studs of pearl, to me shouldst tell who thirst
And hunger still : Then embassies thou show'st
From nations far and nigh ; what honour that,
But tedious waste of time to sit and hear
So many hollow compliments and lies,
Outlandish flatteries ? then proceed'st to talk
Of th' emperor, how easily subdu'd,
How gloriously ; I shall, thou say'st, expell
A brutish monster : What if I withal
Expel a Devil who first made him such ?
Let his tormenter conscience find him out ;
For him I was not sent, nor yet to free
That people victor once, now vile and base,
Deservedly made vassal, who once just,
Frugal, and mild, and temperate, conquer'd well,
But govern ill the nations under yoke,
Peeling their provinces, exhausted all
By lust and rapine ; first ambitious grown
Of triumph, that insulting vanity ;
Then cruel, by their sports to blood innur'd
Of fighting beasts, and men to beasts expos'd,
Luxurious by their wealth, and greedier still,
And from the daily scene effeminate.
What wise and valiant man would seek to free
These thus degenerate, by themselves enslav'd,
Or could of inward slaves make outward free ?
Know therefore when my season comes to sit
On David's throne, it shall be like a tree,
Spreading and overshadowing all the earth,
Or as a stone that shall to pieces dash
All monarchies besides throughout the world,
And of my kingdom there shall be no end :

Means there shall be to this, but what the means,
Is not for thee to know, nor me to tell.

To whom the tempter impudent reply'd.
I see all offers made by me how slight
Thou valu'st, because offer'd, and reject'st :
Nothing will please the difficult and nice,
Or nothing more than still to contradict :
On th' other side know also thou, that I
On what I offer set as high esteem,
Nor what I part with mean to give for nought ;
All these which in a moment thou behold'st,
The kingdoms of the world to thee I give ;
For giv'n to me, I give to whom I please,
No trifle ; yet with this reserve, not else,
On this condition, if thou wilt fall down,
And worship me as thy superior lord,
Easily done, and hold them all of me ;
For what can less so great a gift deserve ?

Whom thus our Saviour answer'd with disdain :
I never lik'd thy talk, thy offers less,
Now both abhor, since thou hast dar'd to utter
Th' abominable terms, impious condition ;
But I endure the time, till which expir'd,
Thou hast permission on me. It is written
The first of all commandments, Thou shalt worship
The Lord thy God, and only him shalt serve ;
And dar'st thou to the Son of God propound
To worship thee accurst, now more accurst
For this attempt, bolder than that on Eve,
And more blasphemous ? which expect to rue
The kingdoms of the world to thee were giv'n,
Permitted rather, and by thee usurp'd,

Other donation none thou canst produce :
 If given, by whom but by the King of kings,
 God over all supreme ? if given to thee,
 By thee how fairly is the giver now
 Repaid ? But gratitude in thee is lost
 Long since. Wert thou so void of fear or shame,
 As offer them to me the Son of God,
 To me my own, on such abhorred pact,
 That I fall down and worship thee as God ?
 Get thee behind me ; plain thou now appear'st
 That evil one, Satan for ever damn'd.

To whom the fiend with fear abash'd reply'd.
 Be not so sore offended, Son of God,
 Though sons of God both angels are and men,
 If I to try whether in higher sort
 Than these thou bear'st that title, have propos'd
 What both from men and angels I receive,
 Tetrarchs of fire, air, flood, and on the earth
 Nations besides from all the quarter'd winds,
 God of this world invok'd and world beneath ;
 Who then thou art, whose coming is foretold
 To me so fatal, me it most concerns,
 The trial hath endamag'd thee no way,
 Rather more honour left and more esteem ;
 Me nought advantag'd, missing what I aim'd.
 Therefore let pass, as they are transitory,
 The kingdoms of this world ; I shall no more
 Advise thee ; gain them as thou can'st, or not.
 And thou thyself seem'st otherwise inclin'd
 Than to a worldly crown, addicted more
 To contemplation and profound dispute,
 As by that early action may be judg'd,

When slipping from thy mother's eye thou went'st
Alone into the temple; there wast found
Among the gravest Rabbies disputant
On points and questions fitting Moses' chair,
'Teaching not taught; the childhood shows the man,
As morning shows the day. Be famous then
By wisdom; as thy empire must extend,
So let extend thy mind o'er all the world,
In knowledge, all things in it comprehend:
All knowledge is not couch'd in Moses' law,
The Pentateuch, or what the prophets wrote;
The Gentiles also know, and write, and teach
To admiration, led by nature's light;
And with the Gentiles much thou must converse,
Ruling them by persuasion as thou mean'st;
Without their learning how wilt thou with them,
Or they with thee hold conversation meet?
How wilt thou reason with them, how refute
Their idolisms, traditions, paradoxes?
Error by his own arms is best evinc'd.
Look once more ere we leave this specular mount
Westward, much nearer by south-west, behold
Where on th' Ægean shore a city stands
Built nobly, pure the air, and light the soil,
Athens the eye of Greece, mother of arts
And eloquence, native to famous wits
Or hospitable, in her sweet recess,
City or suburban, studious walks and shades;
See there the olive grove of Academe,
Plato's retirement, where the Attic bird
Trills her thick-warbled notes the summer long;
There flow'ry hill Hymettus with the fount

Of bees industrious murmur oft invites
To studious musing; there Ilissus rolls
His whisp'ring stream; within the walls then view
The schools of ancient sages; his who bred
Great Alexander to subdue the world,
Lyceum there, and painted Stoa next:
There thou shalt hear and learn the secret pow'r
Of harmony in tones and numbers hit
By voice or hand, and various-measur'd verse,
Æolian charms and Dorian lyric odes,
And his who gave them breath, but higher sung,
Blind Melesigenes thence Homer call'd,
Whose poem Phœbus challeng'd for his own.
Thence what the lofty grave tragœdians taught
In Chorus or Iambic, teachers best
Of moral prudence, with delight receiv'd,
In brief sententious precepts, while they treat
Of fate and chance, and change in human life;
High actions and high passions best describing:
Thence to the famous orators repair,
Those ancient, whose resistless eloquence
Wielded at will that fierce democratic,
Shook th' arsenal and fulmin'd over Greece
To Macedon and Artaxerxes' throne:
To sage philosophy next lend thine ear,
From heav'n descended to the low-rooft house
Of Socrates; see there his tenement,
Whom well inspir'd the oracle pronounc'd
Wiseſt of men; from whose mouth issued forth
Mellifluous streams that water'd all the schools
Of Academics old and new, with those
Sirnam'd Peripatetics, and the sect

Epicurean, and the Stoic severe ;
 These here revolve, or, as thou lik'st, at home,
 Till time mature thee to a kingdom's weight ;
 These rules will render thee a king compleat
 Within thy self, much more with empire join'd.

To whom our Saviour sagely thus reply'd.
 Think not, but that I know these things, or think
 I know them not ; not therefore am I short
 Of knowing what I ought ; he who receives
 Light from above, from the fountain of light,
 No other doctrine needs, though granted true ;
 But these are false, or little else but dreams,
 Conjectures, fancies, built on nothing firm.
 The first and wisest of them all profess'd
 To know this only, That he nothing knew ;
 The next to fabling fell and smooth conceits ;
 A third sort doubted all things, though plain sense ;
 Others in virtue plac'd felicity,
 But virtue join'd with riches and long life ;
 In corporal pleasure he, and careless ease ;
 The Stoic last in philosophic pride,
 By him call'd virtue ; and his virtuous man,
 Wise, perfect in himself, and all possessing
 Equals to God, oft shames not to prefer,
 As fearing God nor man, contemning all
 Wealth, pleasure, pain or torment, death and life,
 Which when he lists he leaves, or boasts he can ;
 For all his tedious talk is but vain boast,
 Or subtle shifts conviction to evade.
 Alas, what can they teach, and not mislead,
 Ignorant of themselves, of God much more,
 And how the world began, and how man fell

Degraded by himself, on grace depending?
 Much of the soul they talk, but all awry,
 And in themselves seek virtue, and to themselves
 All glory arrogate, to God give none,
 Rather accuse him under usual names,
 Fortune and Fate, as one regardless quite
 Of mortal things. Who therefore seeks in these
 True wisdom, finds her not, or by delusion
 Far worse, her false resemblance only meets
 An empty cloud. However, many books,
 Wise men have said, are wearisome; who reads
 Incessantly, and to his reading brings not
 A spirit and judgment equal or superior,
 (And what he brings, what needs he elsewhere seek?)
 Uncertain and unsettled still remains,
 Deep vers'd in books and shallow in himself,
 Crude or intoxicate, collecting toys
 And trifles for choice matters, worth a sponge;
 As children gath'ring pebbles on the shore.
 Or if I would delight my private hours
 With music or with poem, where so soon
 As in our native language can I find
 That solace? all our law and story strew'd
 With hymns, our psalms with artful terms inscrib'd,
 Our Hebrew songs and harps in Babylon,
 That pleas'd so well our victor's ear, declare
 That rather Greece from us these arts deriv'd;
 Ill imitated, while they loudest sing
 The vices of their deities and their own,
 In fable, hymn, or song, so personating
 Their gods ridiculous, and themselves past shame.
 Remove the swelling epithets thick laid

As varnish on a harlot's cheek ; the rest,
 Thin sown with aught of profit or delight,
 Will far be found unworthy to compare
 With Sion's songs, to all true tastes excelling,
 Where God is prais'd aright, and god-like men
 The Holiest of Holies, and his saints,
 Such are from God inspir'd, not such from thee,
 Unless where moral virtue is express'd
 By light of nature not in all quite lost.
 Their orators thou then extoll'st, as those
 The top of eloquence, statists indeed,
 And lovers of their country, as may seem ;
 But herein to our prophets far beneath,
 As men divinely taught, and better teaching
 The solid rules of civil government,
 In their majestic unaffected stile
 Than all the oratory of Greece and Rome.
 In them is plainest taught, and easiest learnt,
 What makes a nation happy, and keeps it so,
 What ruins kingdoms and lays cities flat ;
 These only with our law best form a king.

So spake the Son of God ; but Satan now
 Quite at a loss, for all his darts were spent,
 Thus to our Saviour with stern brow reply'd.

Since neither wealth, nor honour, arms nor arts,
 Kingdom nor empire pleases thee, nor aught
 By me propos'd in life contemplative,
 Or active, tended on by glory, or fame,
 What dost thou in this world ? the wilderness
 For thee is fittest place ; I found thee there,
 And thither will return thee ; yet remember
 What I foretell thee, soon thou shalt have cause

To wish thou never hadst rejected thus
 Nicely or cautiously my offer'd aid,
 Which would have set thee in short time with ease
 On David's throne, or throne of all the world,
 Now at full age, fulness of time, thy season,
 When prophecies of thee are best fulfill'd.
 Now contrary, if I read aught in heav'n,
 Or heav'n write aught of fate, by what the stars
 Voluminous, or single characters,
 In their conjunction met, give me to spell,
 Sorrows, and labours, opposition, hate,
 Attends thee, scorns, reproaches, injuries,
 Violence and stripes, and lastly cruel death;
 A kingdom they portend thee, but what kingdom,
 Real or allegoric I discern not,
 Nor when, eternal sure, as without end,
 Without beginning; for no date prefix'd,
 Directs me in the starry rubric set.

So saying he took (for still he knew his pow'r
 Not yet expir'd) and to the wilderness
 Brought back the Son of God, and left him there,
 Feigning to disappear. Darkneſs now roſe,
 As day-light ſunk, and brought in lowring night
 Her ſhadowy offspring, unſubſtantial both,
 Privation mere of light and abſent day.
 Our Saviour meek and with untroubled mind
 After his airy jaunt, though hurry'd fore,
 Hungry and cold betook him to his reſt,
 Wherever, under ſome concurrence of ſhades
 Whoſe branching arms thick interwin'd might ſhield
 From dews and damps of night his ſhelter'd head,
 But ſhelter'd ſlept in vain; for at his head

The tempter watch'd, and soon with ugly dreams
 Disturb'd his sleep, and either tropic now
 'Gan thunder, and both ends of heav'n the clouds
 From many a horrid rift abortive pour'd
 Fierce rain with lightning mixt, water with fire
 In ruin reconcil'd : Nor slept the winds
 Within their stony caves, but rush'd abroad
 From the four hinges of the world, and fell
 On the vex'd wilderness, whose tallest pines,
 Though rooted deep as high, and sturdiest oaks
 Bow'd their stiff necks, loaden with stormy blasts,
 Or torn up sheer : Ill wast thou shrouded then,
 O patient Son of God, yet only stood'st
 Unshaken ; nor yet staid the terror there,
 Infernal ghosts, and hellish furies, round
 Environ'd thee, some howl'd, some yell'd, some shriek'd,
 Some bent at thee their fiery darts, while thou
 Sat'st unappall'd in calm and sinless peace.
 Thus pass'd the night so foul, till morning fair
 Came forth with pilgrim steps in amice gray ;
 Who with her radiant finger still'd the roar
 Of thunder, chas'd the clouds, and laid the winds,
 And grisly spectres, which the fiend had rais'd
 To tempt the Son of God with terrors dire.
 And now the sun with more effectual beams
 Had chear'd the face of earth, and dry'd the wet
 From drooping plant, or dropping tree ; the birds,
 Who all things now behold more fresh and green,
 After a night of storm so ruinous,
 Clear'd up their choicest notes in bush and spray
 To gratulate the sweet return of morn ;
 Nor yet amidst this joy and brightest morn

Was absent, after all his mischief done,
 The prince of darkness, glad would also seem
 Of this fair change, and to our Saviour came,
 Yet with no new device, they all were spent,
 Rather by this his last affront resolv'd,
 Desp'rate of better course, to vent his rage,
 And mad despight to be so oft repell'd.
 Him walking on a sunny hill he found,
 Back'd on the north and west by a thick wood;
 Out of the wood he starts in wonted shape,
 And in a careless mood thus to him said.

Fair morning yet betides thee, Son of God,
 After a dismal night; I heard the wrack
 As earth and sky would mingle; but myself
 Was distant; and these flaws, though mortals fear them
 As dang'rous to the pillar'd frame of heav'n,
 Or to the earth's dark basis underneath,
 Are to the main as inconsiderable,
 And harmless, if not wholesome, as a sneeze
 To man's less universe, and soon are gone;
 Yet as being oft times noxious where they light
 On man, beast, plant, wasteful and turbulent,
 Like turbulencies in th' affairs of men,
 Over whose heads they roar, and seem to point,
 They oft fore-signify and threaten ill:
 This tempest at this desert most was bent;
 Of men at thee, for only thou here dwell'st.
 Did I not tell thee, if thou didst reject
 The perfect season offer'd with my aid
 To win thy destin'd seat, but wilt prolong
 All to the push of fate, pursue thy way
 Of gaining David's throne no man knows when,

For both the when and how is no where told,
 Thou shalt be what thou art ordain'd, no doubt;
 For angels have proclaim'd it, but concealing
 The time and means: Each act is rightliest done,
 Not when it must, but when it may be best.
 If thou observe not this, be sure to find,
 What I foretold thee, many a hard assay
 Of dangers, and adversities, and pains,
 Ere thou of Israel's scepter get fast hold;
 Whereof this ominous night that clos'd thee round,
 So many terrors, voices, prodigies
 May warn thee, as a sure fore-going sign.

So talk'd he, while the Son of God went on
 And staid not, but in brief him answer'd thus.

Me worse than wet thou find'st not; other harm
 Those terrors which thou speak'st of did me none;
 I never fear'd they could, though noising loud
 And threatning nigh, what they can do as signs
 Betok'ning, or ill boding, I contemn
 As false portents, not sent from God, but thee;
 Who knowing I shall reign past thy preventing,
 Obtrud'st thy offer'd aid, that I accepting
 At least might seem to hold all pow'r of thee,
 Ambitious sp'rit, and would'st be thought my God,
 And storm'st refus'd, thinking to terrify
 Me to thy will; desist, thou art discern'd
 And toil'st in vain, nor me in vain molest.

To whom the fiend now swol'n with rage reply'd.
 Then hear, O Son of David, virgin-born;
 For Son of God to me is yet in doubt,
 Of the Messiah I have heard foretold
 By all the prophets; of thy birth at length

Announc'd by Gabriel with the first I knew,
 And of th' angelic song in Bethlehem field,
 On thy birth-night, that sung thee Saviour born,
 From that time seldom have I ceas'd to eye
 Thy infancy, thy childhood, and thy youth,
 Thy manhood last, though yet in private bred;
 Till at the ford of Jordan, whither all
 Flock'd to the Baptist, I among the rest,
 Though not to be baptiz'd, by voice from heav'n,
 Heard thee pronounc'd the Son of God belov'd.
 Thenceforth I thought thee worth my nearer view
 And narrower scrutiny, that I might learn
 In what degree or meaning thou art call'd
 The Son of God, which bears no single sense;
 The Son of God I also am, or was,
 And if I was, I am; relation stands;
 All men are sons of God; yet thee I thought
 In some respect far higher so declar'd.
 Therefore I watch'd thy footsteps from that hour,
 And follow'd thee still on to this waste wild;
 Where by all best conjectures I collect
 Thou art to be my fatal enemy.
 Good reason then, if I before-hand seek
 To understand my adversary, who
 And what he is; his wisdom, pow'r, intent,
 By parl, or composition, truce, or league
 To win him, or win from him what I can.
 And opportunity I here have had
 To try thee, sift thee, and confess have found thee
 Proof against all temptation as a rock
 Of adamant, and as a center, firm,
 To th' utmost of mere man both wise and good,

Not more; for honours, riches, kingdoms, glory,
 Have been before contemn'd, and may again :
 Therefore to know what more thou art than man,
 Worth naming Son of God by voice from heav'n,
 Another method I must now begin.

So saying he caught him up, and without wing
 Of hippogrif bore through the air sublime
 Over the wilderness and o'er the plain ;
 Till underneath them fair Jerusalem,
 The holy city lifted high her tow'rs,
 And higher yet the glorious temple rear'd
 Her pile, far off appearing like a mount
 Of alabaster, top'd with golden spires :
 There on the highest pinnacle he set
 The Son of God ; and added thus in scorn.

There stand, if thou wilt stand ; to stand upright
 Will ask thee skill ; I to thy father's house
 Have brought thee, and highest plac'd, highest is best,
 Now show thy progeny ; if not to stand,
 Cast thyself down ; safely, if Son of God :
 For it is written, He will give command
 Concerning thee to his angels, in their hands
 They shall uplift thee, lest at any time
 Thou chance to dash thy foot against a stone.

To, whom thus Jesus : Also it is written,
 Tempt not the Lord thy God : He said and stood,
 But Satan smitten with amazement fell.
 As when earth's son Antaeus (to compare
 Small things with greatest) in Iraffa strove
 With Jove's Alcides, and oft foil'd still rose,
 Receiving from his mother Earth new strength,
 Fresh from his fall and fiercer grapple join'd,

Throttled at length in th' air, expir'd and fell;
 So after many a foil the tempter proud,
 Renewing fresh assaults, amidst his pride
 Fell whence he stood to see his victor fall.
 And as that 'Theban monster that propos'd
 Her riddle, and him, who solv'd it not, devour'd,
 That once found out and solv'd, for grief and spight
 Cast herself headlong from th' Ismenian steep;
 So struck with dread and anguish fell the fiend,
 And to his crew, that sat consulting, brought
 Joyless triumphals of his hop'd success,
 Ruin, and desperation, and dismay,
 Who durst so proudly tempt the Son of God.
 So Satan fell; and strait a fiery globe
 Of angels on full sail of wing flew nigh,
 Who on their plummy vans receiv'd him soft
 From his uneasy station, and upbore
 As on a floating couch through the blithe air,
 Then in a flow'ry valley set him down
 On a green bank, and set before him spread
 A table of celestial food, divine,
 Ambrosial fruits, fetch'd from the tree of life,
 And from the fount of life ambrosial drink,
 That soon refresh'd him weary'd, and repair'd
 What hunger, if aught hunger had impair'd,
 Or thirst; and as he fed, angelic quires
 Sung heav'nly anthems of his victory
 Over temptation, and the tempter proud.

True image of the Father, whether thron'd
 In the bosom of blifs, and light of light
 Conceiving, or remote from heav'n, enshrin'd
 In fleshly tabernacle and human form,

Wand'ring the wilderneys, whatever place,
 Habit, or state, or motion, still expressing
 The Son of God, with god-like force endu'd
 Against th' attempter of thy Father's throne,
 And thief of Paradise; him long of old
 Thou didst debel, and down from heaven cast
 With all his army, now thou hast aveng'd
 Supplanted Adam, and by vanquishing
 Temptation, hast regain'd lost Paradise,
 And frustrated the conquest fraudulent :
 He never more henceforth will dare set foot
 In Paradise to tempt ; his snares are broke :
 For though that seat of earthly blifs be fail'd,
 A fairer Paradise is founded now
 For Adam and his chosen sons, whom thou
 A Saviour, art come down to re-install
 Wherec they shall dwell secure, when time shall be,
 Of tempter and temptation without fear.
 But thou, infernal serpent, shalt not long
 Rule in the clouds; like an autumnal star,
 Or lightning, thou shalt fall from heav'n, trod down
 Under his feet : For proof, ere this thou feel'st
 Thy wound, yet not thy last and deadliest wound
 By this repulse receiv'd, and hold'st in hell
 No triumph ; in all her gates Abaddon rues
 Thy bold attempt ; hereafter learn with awe
 To dread the Son of God : He all unarm'd
 Shall chase thee with the terror of his voice
 From thy demoniac holds, possession foul,
 Thee and thy legions ; yelling they shall fly,
 And beg to hide them in a herd of swine,
 Lest he command them down into the deep

Bound, and to torment sent before their time.
Hail Son of the Most High, heir of both worlds,
Queller of Satan, on thy glorious work
Now enter, and begin to save mankind.

Thus they the Son of God our Saviour meek
Sung victor, and from heav'nly feast refresh'd
Brought on his way with joy ; he unobserv'd
Home to his mother's house private return'd.

T H E E N D.

SAMSON AGONISTES,

A

DRAMATIC POEM.

The A U T H O R

J O H N M I L T O N.

Tragoedia est imitatio actionis seriae, etc. per misericordiam et metum perficiens talium affectuum lustrationem. ARISTOT. Poet. Cap. 6.

E 3

OF THAT SORT OF
D R A M A T I C P O E M
WHICH IS CALLED
T R A G E D Y.

TRAGEDY, as it was anciently compos'd, hath been ever held the gravest, moralest, and most profitable of all other poems : Therefore said by Aristotle to be of power, by raising pity and fear, or terror, to purge the mind of those and such like passions, that is, to temper and reduce them to just measure with a kind of delight, stirr'd up by reading or seeing those passions well imitated. Nor is Nature wanting in her own effects to make good his assertion : For so in physic, things of melancholic hue and quality are used against melancholy, sour against sour, salt to remove salt humours. Hence philosophers and other gravest writers, as Cicero, Plutarch, and others, frequently cite out of tragic poets, both to adorn and illustrate their discourse. The apostle Paul himself thought it not unworthy to insert a verse of Euripides into the text of Holy Scripture, 1 Cor. xv. 33. and Paraeus commenting on the Revelation, divides the whole book as a tragedy, into acts distinguish'd each by a chorus of heavenly harpings, and song between. Heretofore men in highest dignity have laboured not a little to be thought able to compose a tragedy. Of that honour Dionysius the elder was no less ambitious, than

before of his attaining to the tyranny. Augustus Caesar also had begun his Ajax, but, unable to please his own judgment with what he had begun, left it unfinished. Seneca the philosopher is by some thought the author of those tragedies (at least the best of them) that go under that name. Gregory Nazianzen, a father of the church, thought it not unbeseeming the sanctity of his person to write a tragedy, which is entitled, Christ Suffering: This is mentioned to vindicate tragedy from the small esteem, or rather infamy, which in the account of many it undergoes at this day with other common interludes; happening through the poet's error of intermixing comic stuff with tragic sadness and gravity; or introducing trivial and vulgar persons, which by all judicious hath been counted absurd; and brought in without discretion, corruptly to gratify the people. And though ancient tragedy use no prologue, yet using sometimes, in case of self-defence, or explanation, that which Martial calls an epistle. In behalf of this tragedy coming forth after the ancient manner much different from what among us passes for best, thus much before hand be may epistled; that chorus is here introduced after the Greek manner, not ancient only but modern, and still in use among the Italians. In the modelling therefore of this poem, with good reason, the ancients and Italians are rather follow'd, as of much more authority and fame. The measure of verse used in the chorus is of all sorts, call'd by the Greeks Monostrophic, or rather Apolelymenon, without regard had to Strophe, Antistrophe, or Epod, which were a kind stanza's fram'd only for the music, then used with the chorus that sung; not essential to the poem, and therefore not material;

or being divided into stanza's or pauses, they may be called Allacostropha. Division into act and scene referring chiefly to stage (to which this work never was intended) is here omitted.

It suffices if the whole drama be found not produced beyond the fifth act. Of the style and uniformity, and that commonly call'd the plot, whether intricate or explicit, which is nothing indeed but such oeconomy or disposition of the fable as may stand best with verisimilitude and decorum, they only will best judge who are not unacquainted with Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, the three tragic poets unequall'd yet by any, and the best rule to all who endeavour to write tragedy. The circumscription of time, wherein the whole drama begins and ends is, according to ancient rule, and best example, within the space of 24 hours.

The A R G U M E N T.

Samson made captive, blind, and now in the prison at Gaza, there to labour as in a common work-house, on a festival-day, in the general cessation from labour, comes forth into the open air, to a place nigh, somewhat retired, there to sit a while and bemoan his condition. Where he happens at length to be visited by certain friends and equals of his tribe, which make the chorus, who seek to comfort him what they can; then by his old father Manoa, who endeavours the like, and withal tells him his purpose to procure his liberty by ransom; lastly, that this feast was proclaimed by the Philistines as a day of thanksgiving for their deliverance from the hands of Samson, which yet more troubles him. Manoa then departs to prosecute his endeavour with the Philistine lords for Samson's redemption; who in the mean while is visited by other persons; and lastly by a public officer to require his coming to the feast before the lords and people, to play or shew his strength in their presence; he at first refuses, dismissing the public officer with

absolute denial to come; at length persuaded inwardly that this was from God, he yields to go along with him, who came now the second time with great threatnings to fetch him; the chorus yet remaining on the place, Manoa returns full of joyful hope, to procure ere long his son's deliverance: In the midst of which discourse an Hebrew comes in haste, confusedly at first, and afterwards more distinctly, relating the catastrophe, what Samson had done to the Philistines, and by accident to himself; wherewith the tragedy ends.

The P E R S O N S.

SAMSON.

MANOA, the father of Samson.

DALILA, his wife.

HARAPHA of Gath,

Public Officer.

Messenger.

Chorus of Danites.

The Scene before the prison in Gaza.

SAMSON AGONISTES.

SAM S. **A** Little onward lend thy guiding hand
To these dark steps, a little further on;
For yonder bank hath choice of sun or shade,
There I am wont to sit, when any chance
Relieves me from my task of fervile toil,
Daily in the common prison else enjoin'd me,
Where I a pris'ner chain'd, scarce freely draw
The air imprison'd also, close and damp,
Unwholsome draught; but here I feel amends,
The breath of heav'n fresh blowing, pure and sweet,
With day-spring born; here leave me to respire.
This day a solemn feast the people hold
To Dagon their sea-idol, and forbid
Laborious works, unwillingly this rest
Their superstition yields me; hence with leave
Retiring from the pop'lar noise, I seek
This unfrequented place to find some ease,
Ease to the body some, none to the mind
From restless thoughts, that like a deadly swarm
Of hornets arm'd, no sooner found alone,
But rush upon me thronging, and present
Times past, what once I was, and what am now.
O wherefore was my birth from heav'n foretold
Twice by an angel; who at last in sight
Of both my parents all in flames ascended
From off the altar, where an off'ring burn'd,
As in a fiery column charioting
His God-like presence, and from some great act

Or benefit reveal'd to Abraham's race?
Why was my breeding order'd and prescrib'd
As of a person separate to God,
Design'd for great exploits; if I must die
Betray'd, captiv'd, and both my eyes put out,
Made of my enemies the scorn and gaze;
To grind in brazen fetters under task,
With this heav'n-gifted strength? O glorious strength
Put to the labour of a beast, debas'd
Lower than bondslave! Promise was that I
Should Israel from Philistian yoke deliver;
Ask for this great deliv'rer now, and find him
Eyeless in Gaza at the mill with slaves,
Himself in bonds under Philistian yoke:
Yet stay, let me not rashly call in doubt
Divine prediction: What if all foretold
Had been fulfill'd but through mine own default,
Whom have I to complain of but myself?
Who this high gift of strength committed to me,
In what part lodg'd, how easily bereft me,
Under the seal of silence could not keep,
But weakly to a woman must reveal it,
O'ercome with importunity and tears.
O impotence of mind, in body strong!
But what is strength without a double share
Of wisdom, vast, unwieldy, burthenfome,
Proudly secure, yet liable to fall
By weakest subtleties, not made to rule,
But to subserve where wisdom bears command!
God, when he gave me strength, to shew withal
How slight the gift was, hung it in my hair.
But peace, I must not quarrel with the will.

Of highest dispensation, which herein
Haply had ends above my reach to know :
Suffices that to me strength is my bane,
And proves the source of all my miseries ;
So many, and so huge, that each apart
Wou'd ask a life to wail ; but chief of all,
O loss of sight, of thee I most complain !
Blind among enemies, O worse than chains,
Dungeon, or beggary, or decrepit age !
Light, the prime work of God, to me is extinct,
And all her various objects of delight
Annull'd, which might in part my grief have eas'd,
Inferior to the vilest now become
Of man or worm ; the vilest here excel me,
They creep, yet see, I dark in light expos'd
To daily fraud, contempt, abuse, and wrong,
Within doors, or without, still as a fool,
In pow'r of others, never in my own ;
Scarce half I seem to live, dead more than half.
O dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon,
Irrecoverably dark, total eclipse
Without all hope of day !
O first created Beam, and thou great Word,
Let there be light, and light was over all ;
Why am I thus bereav'd thy prime decree ?
The sun to me is dark
And silent as the moon,
When she deserts the night
Hid in her vacant interlunar cave.
Since light so necessary is to life,
And almost life itself, if it be true
That light is in the soul,

She all in ev'ry part; why was the fight
To such a tender ball as th' eye confin'd,
So obvious and so easy to be quench'd,
And not as feeling through all parts diffus'd,
That she might look at will through ev'ry pore?
Then had I not been thus exil'd from light,
As in the land of darkness yet in light,
To live a life half dead, a living death,
And bury'd; but O yet more miserable!
Myself my sepulchre, a moving grave,
Bury'd, yet not exempt
By privilege of death and burial
From worst of other evils, pains and wrongs,
But made hereby obnoxious more
To all the miseries of life,
Life in captivity
Among inhuman foes.
But who are these? for with joint pace I hear
The tread of many feet steering this way;
Perhaps my enemies who come to stare
At my affliction, and perhaps t' insult,
Their daily practice to afflict me more.

CHOR. This, this is he; softly a while,
Let us not break in upon him;
O change beyond report, thought, or belief!
See how he lies at random, carelessly diffus'd,
With languish'd head unpropt,
As one past hope, abandon'd,
And by himself giv'n over;
In slavish habit, ill-fitted weeds
O'erworn and soil'd;
Or do my eyes misrepresent? can this be he,

That heroic, that renown'd,
Irresistable Samson; whom unarm'd [stand;
No strength of man, or fiercest wild beast could with-
Who tore the lion, as the lion tears the kid,
Ran on embattl'd armies clad in iron,
And weaponless himself,
Made arms ridiculous, useless the forgery
Of brazen shield and spear, the hammer'd cuirass,
Chalybean temper'd steel, and frock of mail
Adamantean proof;
But safest he who stood aloof,
When insupportable his foot advanc'd,
In scorn of their proud arms and warlike tools,
Spurn'd them to death by troops. The bold Ascalonite
Fled from his lion ramp, old warriors turn'd
Their plated backs under his heel;
Or grov'ling soil'd their crested helmets in the dust.
Then with what trivial weapon came to hand,
The jaw of a dead ass, his sword of bone,
A thousand foreskins fell, the flow'r of Palestine,
In Ramath-lechi famous to this day. [bore
Then by main force pull'd up, and on his shoulders
The gates of Azza, post, and massy bar,
Up to the hill of Hebron, seat of giants old,
No journey of a Sabbath-day, and loaded so;
Like whom the Gentiles feign to bear up heav'n.
Which shall I first bewail,
Thy bondage or lost sight,
Prison within prison
Inseparably dark?
Thou art become (O worst imprisonment!)
The dungeon of thyself; thy soul

(Which men enjoying sight oft without cause com-
 Imprison'd now indeed, [plain)
 In real darkness of the body dwells,
 Shut up from outward light
 T' incorporate with gloomy night;
 For inward light alas
 Puts forth no visual beam.
 O mirror of our fickle state,
 Since man on earth unparallel'd!
 The rarer thy example stands,
 By how much from the top of wond'rous glory,
 Strongest of mortal men,
 To lowest pitch of abject fortune thou art fall'n.
 For him I reckon not in high estate,
 Whom long descent of birth
 Or the sphere of fortune raises;
 But thee whose strength, while virtue was her mate,
 Might have subdu'd the earth,
 Universally crown'd with highest praises.

SAMs. I hear the sound of words, their sense the air
 Dissolves unjointed ere it reach my ear.

CHOR. He speaks, let us draw nigh. Matchless in
 The glory late of Israel, now the grief; [might,
 We come thy friends and neighbours not unknown
 From Eshtaol and Zora's fruitful vale
 To visit or bewail thee, or if better,
 Counsel or consolation we may bring,
 Salve to thy sores; apt words have power to swage
 The tumors of a troubled mind,
 And are as balm to fester'd wounds.

SAMs. Your coming, friends, revives me, for I learn
 Now of my own experience, not by talk,

How counterfeit a coin they are who friends
Bear in their superscription (of the most
I would be understood) in prosp'rous days
They swarm, but in adverse withdraw their head,
Not to be found, though sought. Ye see, O friends,
How many evils have inclos'd me round;
Yet that which was the worst now least afflicts me,
Blindness, for, had I sight, confus'd with shame,
How could I once look up, or heave the head,
Who like a foolish pilot have shipwreck'd
My vessel trusted to me from above,
Gloriously rigg'd, and for a word, a tear,
Fool, have divulg'd the secret gift of God
To a deceitful woman? tell me, friends,
Am I not sung and proverb'd for a fool
In every street? do they not say, how well
Are come upon him his deserts? yet why?
Immeasurable strength they might behold
In me, of wisdom nothing more than mean;
This with the other should, at least, have pair'd,
These two proportion'd ill drove me transverse.

CHOR. Tax not divine disposal; wisest men
Have err'd, and by bad women been deceiv'd;
And shall again, pretend they ne'er so wise.
Deject not then so overmuch thyself,
Who hast of sorrow thy full load besides;
Yet truth to say, I oft have heard men wonder
Why thou should'st wed Philistian women rather
Than of thine own tribe fairer, or as fair,
At least of thine own nation, and as noble.

SAM S. The first I saw at Timna, and she pleas'd
Me, not my parents, that I sought to wed

The daughter of an infidel : they knew not
 That what I motion'd was of God ; I knew
 From intimate impulse, and therefore urg'd
 The marriage on ; that by occasion hence
 I might begin Israel's deliverance,
 The work to which I was divinely call'd.
 She proving false, the next I took to wife
 (O that I never had ! fond wish too late,)
 Was in the vale of Sorec, Dalila,
 That specious monster, my accomplish'd snare.
 I thought it lawful from my former act,
 And the same end ; still watching to oppress
 Israel's oppressors : Of what now I suffer,
 She was not the prime cause, but I myself,
 Who vanquish'd with a peal of words (O weakness !)
 Gave up my fort of silence to a woman.

CHOR. In seeking just occasion to provoke
 The Philistine, thy country's enemy,
 Thou never wast remiss, I bear thee witness :
 Yet Israel still serves with all his sons.

SAMs. That fault I take not on me, but transfer
 On Israel's governors, and heads of tribes,
 Who seeing those great acts, which God had done
 Singly by me against their conquerors,
 Acknowledg'd not, or not at all consider'd
 Deliverance offer'd : I on th' other side
 Us'd no ambition to commend my deeds,
 The deeds themselves, tho' mute, spoke loud the doer ;
 But they persisted deaf, and would not seem
 To count them things worth notice, till at length
 Their lords the Philistines with gather'd pow'rs,
 Enter'd Judea seeking me, who then

Safe to the rock of Etham was retir'd,
Not flying but fore-casting in what place
To set upon them, what advantag'd best :
Mean while the men of Judah, to prevent
The harrafs of their land, beset me round;
I willingly on some conditions came
Into their hands, and they as gladly yield me
To the uncircumcis'd a welcome prey,
Bound with two cords ; but cords to me were threads
Touch'd with the flame : On their whole host I flew
Unarm'd, and with a trivial weapon fell'd
Their choicest youth ; they only liv'd who fled.
Had Judah that day join'd, or one whole tribe,
They had by this possess'd the tow'rs of Gath,
And lorded over them whom now they serve :
But what more oft in nations grown corrupt
And by their vices brought to servitude,
'Than to love bondage more than liberty,
Bondage with ease than strenuous liberty ;
And to despise, or envy, or suspect
Whom God hath of his special favour rais'd
As their deliv'rer ; if he aught begin,
How frequent to desert him, and at last
To heap ingratitude on worthiest deeds ?

CHOR. Thy words to my remembrance bring
How Succoth and the fort of P'enuel
Their great deliverer contemn'd,
The matchless Gideon in pursuit
Of Madian and her vanquish'd kings :
And how ingrateful Ephraim
Had dealt with Jephtha, who by argument,
Not worse than by his shield and spear,

Defended Israel from the Ammonite,
Had not his prowess quell'd their pride
In that fore battle, when so many dy'd
Without reprieve adjudg'd to death,
For want of well pronouncing Shibboleth.

SAMs. Of such examples add me to the roll,
Me easily indeed mine may neglect,
But God's propos'd deliverance not so.

CHOR. Just are the ways of God,
And justifiable to men;
Unless there be who think not God at all:
If any be, they walk obscure;
For of such doctrine never was there school,
But the heart of the fool,
And no man therein doctor but himself.

Yet more there be who doubt his ways not just,
As to his own edicts found contradicting,
Then give the reigns to wandring thought,
Regardless of his glory's diminution;
Till by their own perplexities involv'd
They ravel more, still less resolv'd,
But never find self-satisfying solution.

As if they would confine th' Interminable,
And tie him to his own prescript,
Who made our laws to bind us, not himself,
And hath full right t' exempt
Whom so it pleases him by choice
From national obstriction, without taint
Of sin, or legal debt;
For with his own laws he can best dispense.

He would not else, who never wanted means,
Nor in respect of th' enemy just cause

To set his people free,
Have prompted this heroic Nazarite,
Against his vow of strictest purity,
To seek in marriage that fallacious bride,
Unclean, unchaste.

Down reason then, at least vain reasonings down,
Though reason here aver
That moral verdict quits her of unclean :
Unchaste was subsequent, her stain not his.

But see here comes thy rev'rend sire
With careful step, locks white as down,
Old Manoa : Advise
Forthwith how thou ought'st to receive him.

SAMs. Ay me, another inward grief awak'd
With mention of that name renews th' assault.

MAN. Brethren and men of Dan, for such ye seem,
Though in this uncouth place ; if old respect,
As I suppose, towards your once glory'd friend,
My son now captive, hither hath inform'd
Your younger feet, while mine cast back with age
Came lagging after ; say if he be here.

CHOR. As signal now in low dejected state
As erst in highest, behold him where he lies.

MAN. O miserable change ! is this the man,
That invincible Samson, far renown'd,
The dread of Israel's foes, who with a strength
Equivalent to angels walk'd their streets,
None offering fight ; who single combatant
Duell'd their armies rank'd in proud array,
Himself an army, now unequal match
To save himself against a coward arm'd
At one spear's length. O ever-failing trust

In mortal strength ! and oh what not in man
Deceivable and vain ? Nay, what thing good
Pray'd for, but often proves our woe, our bane ?
I pray'd for children, and thought barrenness
In wedlock a reproach ; I gain'd a son,
And such a son as all men hail'd me happy ;
Who would be now a father in my stead ?
O wherefore did God grant me my request,
And as a blessing with such pomp adorn'd ?
Why are his gifts desirable, to tempt
Our earnest pray'rs, then given with solemn hand
As graces, draw a scorpion's tail behind ?
For this did th' angel twice descend ? for this
Ordain'd thy nurture holy, as of a plant
Select and sacred, glorious for a while,
The miracle of men ; then in an hour
Ensnared, assaulted, overcome, led bound,
Thy foes derision, captive, poor and blind,
Into a dungeon thrust, to work with slaves ?
Alas methinks whom God hath chosen once
To worthiest deeds, if he through frailty err,
He should not so o'erwhelm, and as a thrall
Subject him to so foul indignities,
Be it but for honour's sake of former deeds.

SAMs. Appoint not heav'nly disposition, father ;
Nothing of all these evils hath befall'n me
But justly ; I myself have brought them on,
Sole author, I, sole cause : If aught seem vile,
As vile hath been my folly, who have profan'd
The mystery of God giv'n me under pledge
Of vow, and have betray'd it to a woman,
A Canaanite, my faithless enemy.

This well I knew, nor was at all surpris'd,
But warn'd by oft experience; did not she
Of Timna first betray me, and reveal
The secret wrested from me in her height
Of nuptial love profess, carrying it strait
To them who had corrupted her, my spies,
And rivals? in this other was there found
More faith? who also in her prime of love,
Spousal embraces, vitiated with gold,
Though offer'd only, by the scent conceiv'd
Her spurious first-born, treason against me?
Thrice she assay'd with flatt'ring pray'rs and sighs,
And amorous reproaches, to win from me
My capital secret, in what part my strength
Lay stor'd, in what part summ'd, that she might know:
Thrice I deluded her, and turn'd to sport
Her importunity, each time perceiving
How openly, and with what impudence
She purpos'd to betray me, and (which was worse
Than undissembled hate) with what contempt
She sought to make me traitor to myself;
Yet the fourth time, when must'ring all her wiles,
With blandish'd parleys, feminine assaults,
Tongue-batteries, she surceas'd not day nor night
To storm me over-watch'd, and weary'd out.
At times when men seek most repose and rest,
I yielded, and unlock'd her all my heart,
Who with a grain of manhood well resolv'd
Might easily have shook off all her snares:
But foul effeminacy held me yok'd
Her bond-slave; O indignity, O blot
To honour and religion! servile mind
Rewarded well with servile punishment!

The base degree to which I now am fall'n,
 These rags, this grinding, is not yet so base
 As was my former servitude, ignoble,
 Unmanly, ignominious, infamous,
 True slavery, and that blindness worse than this,
 That saw not how degen'rately I serv'd.

MAN. I cannot praise thy marriage choices, son,
 Rather approv'd them not; but thou didst plead
 Divine impulsion prompting how thou might'st
 Find some occasion to infect our foes.
 I state not that; this I am sure, our foes
 Found soon occasion thereby to make thee
 Their captive and their triumph; thou the sooner
 Temptation found'st or over-potent charms
 To violate the sacred trust of silence
 Deposited within thee; which to have kept
 Tacit, was in thy pow'r: True; and thou bear'st
 Enough, and more, the burden of that fault;
 Bitterly hast thou paid, and still art paying
 That rigid score. A worse thing yet remains,
 This day the Philistines a pop'lar feast
 Here celebrate in Gaza; and proclaim
 Great pomp and sacrifice, and praises loud
 To Dagon, as their god who hath deliver'd
 Thee, Samson, bound and blind into their hands,
 Them out of thine, who slew'st them many a slain.
 So Dagon shall be magnify'd, and God,
 Besides whom is no god, compar'd with idols,
 Disglorify'd, blasphem'd, and had in scorn
 By the idolatrous rout amidst their wine;
 Which to have come to pass by means of thee,
 Samson, of all thy sufferings think the heaviest,

Of all reproach the most with shame that ever
Could have befall'n thee and thy father's house.

SAM S. Father, I do acknowledge and confess
That I this honour, I this pomp have brought
To Dagon, and advanc'd his praises high
Among the heathen round; to God have brought
Dishonour, obloquy, and op'd the mouths
Of idolists, and atheists; have brought scandal
To Israel, diffidence of God, and doubt
In feeble hearts, propense enough before
To waver, or fall off and join with idols;
Which is my chief affliction, shame and sorrow,
The anguish of my soul, that suffers not
Mine eye to harbour sleep, or thoughts to rest.
This only hope relieves me, that the strife
With me hath end; all the contest is now
'Twixt God and Dagon; Dagon hath presum'd
Me overthrown, to enter lists with God,
His deity comparing and preferring
Before the God of Abraham. He, be sure,
Will not connive, or linger, thus provok'd,
But will arise and his great name assert:
Dagon must stoop, and shall ere long receive
Such a discomfit, as shall quite despoil him
Of all these boasted trophies won on me,
And with confusion blank his worshippers. [words

MAN. With cause this hope relieves thee, and these
I as a prophecy receive; for God,
Nothing more certain, will not long defer
To vindicate the glory of his name
Against all competition, nor will long
Endure it, doubtful whether God be Lord,

Or Dagon. But for thee what shall be done !
Thou must not in the meanwhile here forgot
Lie in this miserable loathsome plight
Neglected. I already have made way
To some Philistian lords, with whom to treat
About thy ranfome: Well they may by this
Have fatisfied their utmost of revenge
By pains and flav'ries, worfe than death, inflicted
On thee, who now no more can do them harm.

SAMs. Spare that propofal, father, spare the
Of that follicitation ; let me here, [trouble
As I deferve, pay on my punishment ;
And expiate, if poffible, my crime,
Shameful garrulity. To have reveal'd
Secrets of men, the fecrets of a friend,
How heinous had the fact been, how deferving
Contempt and fcorn of all, to be excluded
All friendship, and avoided as a blab,
The mark of fool fet on his front ? but I
God's counfel have not kept, his holy fecret
Presumptuoufly have publish'd, impioufly,
Weakly at leaft, and shamefully ; a fin
That Gentiles in their parables condemn
To their abyfs and horrid pains confin'd.

MAN. Be penitent and for thy fault contrite,
But act not in thy own affliction, fon ;
Repent the fin, but if the punishment
Thou can'ft avoid, felf-prefervation bids ;
Or th' execution leave to high difpofal,
And let another hand, not thine, exact
Thy penal forfeit from thyfelf ; perhaps
God will relent, and quit thee all his debt ;

Who ever more approves and more accepts
(Best pleas'd with humble and filial submission)
Him who imploring mercy sues for life,
Than who self-rigorous chuses death as due;
Which argues over-just, and self-displeas'd
For self-offence, more than for God offended.
Reject not then what offer'd means, who knows
But God hath set before us, to return thee
Home to thy country and his sacred house,
Where thou may'st bring thy offerings, to avert
His further ire, with prayers and vows renew'd?

SAM S. His pardon I implore; but as for life,
To what end should I seek it? when in strength
All mortals I excell'd; and great in hopes
With youthful courage and magnanimous thoughts
Of birth from heav'n foretold and high exploits,
Full of divine instinct, after some proof
Of acts indeed heroic, far beyond
The sons of Anak, famous now and blaz'd,
Fearless of danger, like a petty God
I walk'd about admir'd of all and dreaded
On hostile ground, none daring my affront.
Then swell'n with pride into the snare I fell
Of fair fallacious looks, venereal trains,
Soft'ned with pleasure and voluptuous life;
At length to lay my head and hallow'd pledge
Of all my strength in the lascivious lap
Of a deceitful concubine, who shorn me
Like a tame weather, all my precious fleece,
Then turn'd me out ridiculous, despoil'd,
Shaven and disarm'd among mine enemies.

CHOR. Desire of wine and all delicious drinks,

Which many a famous warrior overturns,
 Thou couldst repress, nor did the dancing ruby
 Sparkling, out-pour'd, the flavour, or the smell
 Or taste that cheers the heart of gods and men,
 Allure thee from the cool crystalline stream.

SAMs. Where-ever fountain or fresh current flow'd
 Against the eastern ray, translucent, pure
 With touch aetherial of heav'n's fiery rod,
 I drank, from the clear milky juice allaying
 Thirst, and refresh'd ; nor envy'd them the grape
 Whose heads that turbulent liquor fills with fumes.

CHOR. O madness, to think use of strongest wines
 And strongest drinks our chief support of health,
 When God with these forbidd'n made choice to rear
 His mighty champion, strong above compare,
 Whose drink was only from the liquid brook.

SAMs. But what avail'd this temp'rance, not compleat
 Against another object more enticing ?
 What boots it at one gate to make defence,
 And at another to let in the foe,
 Effeminately vanquish'd ? by which means,
 Now blind, dishearten'd, sham'd, dishonour'd, quell'd,
 To what can I be useful, wherein serve
 My nation, and the work from heav'n impos'd,
 But to sit idle on the household-hearth,
 A burd'nous drone; to visitants a gaze,
 Or pity'd object, these redundant locks
 Robustious to no purpose clu string down,
 Vain monuments of strength ; till length of years
 And sedentary numbness craze my limbs
 'To a contemptible old age obscure?
 Here rather let me drudge and earn my bread

Till vermin or the draff of servile food
Confume me, and oft invoked death
Hasten the welcome end of all my pains. [gift

MAN. Wilt thou then serve the Philistines with that
Which was expressly giv'n thee to annoy them?
Better at home lie bed-rid, not only idle,
Inglorious, unemploy'd, with age out-worn.
But God who caus'd a fountain at thy pray'r
From the dry ground to spring, thy thirst t' allay
After the brunt of battle, can as easy
Cause light again within thy eyes to spring,
Wherewith to serve him better than thou hast;
And I persuade me so; why else this strength
Mirac'lous yet remaining in those locks?
His might continues in thee not for naught,
Nor shall his wondrous gifts be frustrate thus.

SAMS. All otherwise to me my thoughts portend,
That these dark orbs no more shall treat with light,
Nor th' other light of life continue long,
But yield to double darkness nigh at hand:
So much I feel my genial spirits droop,
My hopes all flat, nature within me seems
In all her functions weary of herself;
My race of glory run, and race of shame,
And I shall shortly be with them at rest.

MAN. Believe not these suggestions, which proceed
From anguish of the mind and humours black,
That mingle with thy fancy. I however
Must not omit a father's timely care
To prosecute the means of thy deliverance
By ransome, or how else: Meanwhile be calm,
And healing words from these thy friends admit.

SAMs. O that torment should not be confin'd
To the body's wounds and sores,
With maladies innumerable
In heart, head, breast, and reins;
But must secret passage find
To th' inmost mind,
There exercise all his fierce accidents,
And on her purest spirits prey,
As on entrails, joints and limbs,
With answerable pains, but more intense,
Though void of corporal sense.

My griefs not only pain me
As a lingering disease,
But finding no redress, ferment and rage,
Nor less than wounds immedicable
Rankle, and fester, and gangrene,
To black mortification.
Thoughts my tormentors arm'd with deadly stings
Mangle my apprehensive tenderest parts,
Exasperate, exulcerate, and raise
Dire inflammation, which no cooling herb
Or medicinal liquor can assuage,
Nor breath of vernal air from snowy Alp.
Sleep hath forsook and giv'n me o'er
To death's benumbing opium as my only cure:
Thence faintings, swoonings of despair,
And sense of Heav'n's desertion.

I was his nursing once and choice delight,
His destin'd from the womb,
Promis'd by heav'nly message twice descending,
Under his special eye
Abstemious I grew up and thriv'd amain;

He led me on to mightiest deeds
 Above the nerve of mortal arm
 Against th' uncircumcis'd, our enemies :
 But now hath cast me off as never known,
 And to those cruel enemies,
 Whom I by his appointment had provok'd,
 Left me all helpless with th' irreparable loss
 Of sight, reserv'd alive to be repeated
 The subject of their cruelty or scorn.
 Nor am I in the list of them that hope ;
 Hopeless are all my evils, all remediless ;
 'This one prayer yet remains, might I be heard,
 No long petition, speedy death,
 The close of all my miseries, and the balm.

CHOR. Many are the sayings of the wise
 In ancient and in modern books enroll'd,
 Extolling patience as the truest fortitude ;
 And to the bearing well of all calamities,
 All chances incident to man's frail life,
 Consolatories writ
 With study'd argument, and much persuasion sought,
 Lenient of grief and anxious thought :
 But with th' afflicted in his pangs their sound
 Little prevails, or rather seems a tune
 Harsh, and of dissonant mood from his complaint ;
 Unless he feel within
 Some source of consolation from above,
 Secret refreshings, that repair his strength,
 And fainting spirits uphold.

God of our fathers, what is man !
 That thou tow'rds him with hand so various,
 Or might I say contrarious,

Temper'st thy providence through his short course,
Not ev'nly, as thou rul'st
Th' angelic orders and inferior creatures mute,
Irrational and brute.
Nor do I name of men the common rout,
That wand'ring loose about,
Grow up and perish, as the summer-fly,
Heads without name no more remember'd,
But such as thou hast solemnly elected,
With gifts and graces eminently adorn'd,
To some great work, thy glory,
And people's safety, which in part they effect :
Yet toward these thus dignify'd, thou oft
Amidst their height of noon, [gard
Change'st thy countenance, and thy hand with no re-
Of highest favours past
From thee on them, or them to thee of service.

Nor only dost degrade them, or remit
To life obscur'd, which were a fair dismissal,
But throw'st them lower than thou didst exalt them
Unseemly falls in human eye, [high,
Too grievous for the trespass or omission ;
Oft leav'st them to the hostile sword
Of Heathen and profane, their carcases
To dogs and fowls a prey, or else captiv'd ;
Or to th' unjust tribunals, under change of times,
And condemnation of th' ingrateful multitude.
If these they 'scape, perhaps in poverty
With sickness and disease thou bow'st them down,
Painful diseases and deform'd,
In crude old age ;
Though not disordinate, yet causeless suff'ring

The punishment of dissolute days : In fine,
Just or unjust, alike seem miserable,
For oft alike both come to evil end.

So deal not with this once thy glorious champion,
The image of thy strength, and mighty minister.
What do I beg? how hast thou dealt already?
Behold him in his state calamitous, and turn
His labours, for thou canst, to peaceful end.

But who is this, what thing of sea or land?
Female of sex it seems,
'That so bedeck'd, ornate, and gay,
Comes this way failing
Like a stately ship
Of Tarsus, bound for th' isles
Of Javan or Gadire,
With all her bravery on, and tackle trim,
Sails fill'd, and streamers waving,
Court'd by all the winds that hold them play.
An amber scent of odorous perfume
Her harbinger, a damsel train behind;
Some rich Philistian matron she may seem,
And now at nearer view, no other certain
Than Dalila thy wife. [near me.

SAMs: My wife, my trayt'refs, let her not come

CHOR. Yet on she moves, now stands and eyes thee
Aboutt'have spoke, but now, with head declin'd, [fix'd.
Like a fair flow'r furcharg'd with dew, she weeps,
And words address'd seem into tears dissolv'd,
Wetting the borders of her silk'n veil;
But now again she makes address to speak.

DAL. With doubtful feet and wavering resolution
I came, still dreading thy displeasure, Samson,

Which to have merited, without excuse,
I cannot but acknowledge; yet if tears
May expiate (though the fact more evil drew
In the perverse event than I foresaw)
My penance hath not slacken'd, though my pardon
No way assur'd. But conjugal affection
Prevailing over fear, and timorous doubt,
Hath led me on desirous to behold
Once more thy face, and know of thy estate,
If aught in my ability may serve
To lighten what thou suffer'st, and appease
Thy mind with what amends is in my pow'r,
Though late, yet in some part to recompense
My rash, but more unfortunate misdeed.

SAMs. Out, out Hyaena! these are thy wonted
And arts of ev'ry woman false like thee, [arts,
To break all faith, all vows, deceive, betray,
Then as repentant to submit, beseech,
And reconcilement move with feign'd remorse,
Confess, and promise wonders in her change,
Not truly penitent, but chief to try,
Her husband, how far urg'd his patience bears,
His virtue or weakness which way to assail:
Then with more cautious and instructed skill
Again transgresses, and again submits;
That wisest and best men full oft beguil'd,
With goodness principl'd not to reject
The penitent, but ever to forgive,
Are drawn to wear out miserable days,
Entangl'd with a pois'nous bosom snake,
If not by quick destruction soon cut off,
As I by thee, to ages an example.

DAL. Yet hear me, Samson; not that I endeavour
To lessen or extenuate my offence,
But that on th' other side if it be weigh'd
By itself, with aggravations not furcharg'd,
Or else with just allowance counterpois'd,
I may, if possible, thy pardon find
The easier towards me, or thy hatred less.
First granting, as I do, it was a weakness
In me, but incident to all our sex,
Curiosity, inquisitive, importune
Of secrets, then with like infirmity
To publish them, both common female faults:
Was it not weakness also to make known
For importunity, that is, for naught,
Wherein consisted all thy strength and safety?
To what I did thou shew'd'st me first the way.
But I to enemies reveal'd, and should not:
Nor should'st thou have trusted that to woman's frailty:
Ere I to thee, thou to thyself wast cruel.
Let weakness then with weakness come to parle,
So near related, or the same of kind,
'Thine forgive mine; that men may censure thine
The gentler, if severely thou exact not
More strength from me, than in thyself was found.
And what if love, which thou interpret'st hate,
The jealousy of love, pow'rful of sway,
In human hearts, nor less in mine towards thee,
Caus'd what I did? I saw thee mutable
Of fancy, fear'd lest one day thou wouldst leave me
As her at Timna; fought by all means therefore
How to endear and hold thee to me firmest:
No better way I saw than by importuning

To learn thy secrets, get into my pow'r
Thy key of strength and safety : 'Thou wilt say,
Why then reveal'd ? I was assur'd by those
Who tempted me, that nothing was design'd
Against thee but safe custody and hold :
That made for me, I knew that liberty
Would draw thee forth to perilous enterprises,
While I at home fate full of cares and fears,
Wailing thy absence in my widow'd bed;
Here I should still enjoy thee day and night
Mine and love's pris'ner, not the Philistines,
Whole to myself, unhazarded abroad,
Fearless at home of partners in my love.
These reasons in love's law have past for good,
Though fond and reasonless to some perhaps;
And love hath oft, well meaning, wrought much woe,
Yet always pity or pardon hath obtain'd.
Be not unlike all others, not austere
As thou art strong, inflexible as steel.
If thou in strength all mortals dost exceed,
In uncompassionate anger do not so.

SAM'S. How cunningly the forcerefs displays
Her own transgressions, to upbraid me mine ?
'That malice, not repentance, brought thee hither,
By this appears : I gave, thou say'st, th' example,
I led the way, bitter reproach, but true ;
I to myself was false ere thou to me ;
Such pardon therefore as I give my folly,
Take to thy wicked deed ; which when thou seest
Impartial, self-severe, inexorable,
'Thou wilt renounce thy seeking, and much rather
Confess it feign'd. Weakness is thy excuse,

And I believe it, weakness to resist
Philistian gold : If weakness may excuse,
What murderer, what traitor, parricide,
Incestuous, sacrilegious, but may plead it?
All wickedness is weakness ; that plea therefore
With God or man will gain thee no remission.
But love constrain'd thee ; call it furious rage
To satisfy thy lust : Love seeks to have love ;
My love how couldst thou hope, who took'st the way
To raise in me inexpiable hate,
Knowing, as needs I must, by thee betray'd ?
In vain thou striv'st to cover shame with shame,
Or by evasions thy crime uncover'st more.

DAL. Since thou determin'st weakness for no plea
In man or woman, though to thy own condemning,
Hear what assaults I had, what snares besides,
What sieges girt me round, ere I consented ;
Which might have aw'd the best resolv'd of men,
The constantest, to have yielded without blame.
It was not gold, as to my charge thou lay'st,
That wrought with me : Thou know'st the magistrates
And princes of my country came in person,
Solicited, commanded, threaten'd, urg'd,
Adjur'd by all the bonds of civil duty
And of religion, press'd how just it was,
How honourable, how glorious to entrap
A common enemy, who had destroy'd
Such numbers of our nation : And the priest
Was not behind, but ever at my ear,
Preaching how meritorious with the gods
It would be to ensnare an irreligious
Dishonourer of Dagon : What had I

T' oppose against such pow'rful arguments?
Only my love of thee held long debate;
And combated in silence all these reasons
With hard contest: At length that grounded maxim,
So ripe and celebrated in the mouths
Of wisest men, that to the public good
Private respects must yield, with grave authority
Took full possession of me and prevail'd;
Virtue, as I thought, truth, duty so enjoining.

SAM S. I thought where all thy circling wiles would
In feign'd religion, smooth hypocrisy. [end;
But had thy love, still odiously pretended,
Been, as it ought, sincere, it wou'd have taught thee
Far other reasonings, brought forth other deeds.
I before all the daughters of my tribe
And of my nation, chose thee from among
My enemies, lov'd thee, as too well thou knew'st,
Too well, unbosom'd all my secrets to thee,
Not out of levity, but overpow'r'd
By thy request, who could deny thee nothing;
Yet now am judg'd an enemy. Why then
Didst thou at first receive me for thy husband?
Then, as since then, thy country's foe protest?
Being once a wife, for me thou wast to leave
Parents and country; nor was I their subject,
Nor under their protection, but my own,
Thou mine, not theirs: If aught against my life
Thy country fought of thee, it fought unjustly,
Against the law of nature, law of nations,
No more thy country, but an impious crew
Of men conspiring to uphold their state
By worse than hostile deeds, violating the ends

For which our country is a name so dear;
Not therefore to be obey'd. But zeal mov'd thee;
To please thy gods thou didst it; gods unable
T' acquit themselves and prosecute their foes
But by ungodly deeds, the contradiction
Of their own deity, gods cannot be;
Less therefore to be pleas'd, obey'd, or fear'd.
These false pretexs and varnish'd colours failing.
Bare in thy guilt, how foul must thou appear?

DAL. In argument with men a woman ever
Goes by the worse, whatever be her cause.

SAM. For want of words no doubt, or lack of breath,
Witness when I was worried with thy peals.

DAL. I was a fool, too rash, and quite mistaken
In what I thought would have succeeded best.

Let me obtain forgiveness of thee, Samson,
Afford me place to shew what recompence

Towards thee I intend for what I have misdone,
Misguided; only what remains past cure

Bear not too sensibly, nor still insist
T' afflict thyself in vain: Though sight be lost,

Life yet hath many solaces, enjoy'd
Where other senses want not their delights

At home in leisure and domestic ease,
Exempt from many a care and chance to which

Eye-sight exposes daily men abroad.
I to the lords will intercede, not doubting

Their favourable ear, that I may fetch thee
From forth this loathsome prison-house, t' abide

With me, where my redoubl'd love and care
With nursing diligence, to me glad office,

May ever tend about thee to old age

With all things grateful chear'd, and so supply'd
That what by me thou hast lost thou least shalt miss.

SAM. No, no, of my condition take no care;
It fits not; thou and I long since are twain:
Nor think me so unwary or accurst
To bring my feet again into the snare
Where once I have been caught: I know thy trains,
Though dearly to my cost, thy gins, and toils;
Thy fair enchanted cup, and warbling charms
No more on me have pow'r, their force is null'd;
So much of adders wisdom I have learn'd
To fence my ear against thy forceries.
If in my flow'r of youth and strength, when all men
Lov'd, honour'd, fear'd me, thou alone could'st hate me
Thy husband, slight me, sell me, and forego me;
How would'st thou use me now, blind, and thereby
Deceivable, in most things as a child
Helpless, thence easily contemn'd, and scorn'd,
And last neglected? how would'st thou insult,
When I must live uxorious to thy will
In perfect thralldom, how again betray me,
Bearing my words and doings to the lords
To gloss upon, and censuring, frown or smile?
This jail I count the house of liberty
To thine, whose doors my feet shall never enter.

DAL. Let me approach at least, and touch thy hand.

SAM. Not for thy life, lest fierce remembrance wake
My sudden rage to tear thee joint by joint.
At distance I forgive thee, go with that;
Bewail thy falsehood, and the pious works
It hath brought forth to make thee memorable
Among illustrious women, faithful wives:

Cherish thy hasten'd widowhood with the gold
Of matrimonial treason : So farewell.

DAL. I see thou art implacable, more deaf
To pray'rs than winds and seas, yet winds to seas
Are reconcil'd at length, and sea to shore :
Thy anger, unappeasable, still rages,
Eternal tempest never to be calm'd.
Why do I humble thus myself, and suing
For peace, reap nothing but repulse and hate ?
Bid go with evil omen and the brand
Of infamy upon my name denounc'd ?
To mix with thy concernments I desist
Henceforth, nor too much disapprove my own.
Fame, if not double-fac'd, is double-mouth'd,
And with contrary blasts proclaims most deeds ;
On both his wings, one black, the other white,
Bears greatest names in his wild airy flight.
My name perhaps among the circumcis'd
In Dan, in Judah, and the bord'ring tribes
To all posterity may stand defam'd,
With malediction mention'd, and the blot
Of falsehood most unconjugal traduc'd.
But in my country where I most desire,
In Ecron, Gaza, Afdod, and in Gath,
I shall be nam'd among the famous
Of women, sung at solemn festivals,
Living and dead recorded, who to save
Her country from a fierce destroyer, chose
Above the faith of wedlock-bands, my tomb
With odours visited and annual flow'rs ;
Not less renown'd than in mount Ephraim,
Jael, who with inhospitable guile

Smote Sifera sleeping through the temples nail'd.
 Nor shall I count it heinous to enjoy
 The public marks of honour and reward
 Conferr'd upon me, for the piety
 Which to my country I was judg'd to have shewn.
 At this whoever envies or repines,
 I leave him to his lot, and like my own.

CHOR. She's gone, a manifest serpent by her sting
 Discover'd in the end, till now conceal'd.

SAMs. So let her go, God sent her to debase me,
 And aggravate my folly, who committed
 To such a viper his most sacred trust
 Of secrecy, my safety, and my life.

CHOR. Yet beauty, tho' injurious, hath strange power,
 After offence returning, to regain
 Love once possess'd, nor can be easily
 Repuls'd, without much inward passion felt
 And secret sting of amorous remorse.

SAMs. Love-quarrels oft in pleasing concord end,
 Not wedlock-treachery endang'ring life.

CHOR. It is not virtue, wisdom, valour, wit,
 Strength, comeliness of shape, or amplest merit,
 That woman's love can win or long inherit;
 But what it is, hard is to say,
 Harder to hit,
 (Which way soever men refer it)
 Much like thy riddle, Samson in one day
 Or seven, though one should musing sit.

If any of these or all, the Timnian bride
 Had not so soon preferr'd
 Thy paranymp, worthless to thee compar'd,
 Successor in thy bed,

Nor both so loosely difally'd
Their nuptials, nor this last so treacherously
Had shorn the fatal harvest of thy head.
Is it for that such outward ornament
Was lavish'd on their sex, that inward gifts
Were left for haste unfinish'd, judgment scant,
Capacity not rais'd to apprehend,
Or value what is best
In choice, but ofttest to affect the wrong?
Or was too much of self-love mix'd,
Of constancy no root infix'd,
That either they love nothing, or not long?

Whate'er it be, to wisest men and best
Seeming at first all heav'nly under virgin veil,
Soft, modest, meek, demure,
Once join'd, the contrary she proves, a thorn
Intestine, far within defensive arms
A cleaving mischief, in his way to virtue
Adverse and turbulent, or by her charms
Draws him awry enslav'd
With dotage, and his sense deprav'd
To folly and shameful deeds which ruin ends.
What pilot so expert but needs must wreck
Embark'd with such a steers-mate at the helm?

Favour'd of heav'n who finds
One virtuous rarely found,
That in domestic good combines:
Happy that house! his way to peace is smooth:
But virtue which breaks through all opposition,
And all temptation can remove,
Most shines, and most is acceptable above.

Therefore God's universal law

Gave to the man despotic power
 Over his female in due awe,
 Nor from that right to part an hour,
 Smile she or lowr :
 So shall he least confusion draw
 On his whole life, not sway'd
 By female usurpation, or dismay'd.

But had we best retire, I see a storm ?

SAMs. Fair days have oft contracted wind and rain.

CHOR. But this another kind of tempest brings.

SAMs. Be less abstruse, my riddling days are past.

CHOR. Look now for no enchanting voice, nor fear
 The bait of honied words ; a rougher tongue
 Draws hitherward, I know him by his stride,
 'The giant Harapha of Gath, his look
 Haughty as is his pile high-built and proud.
 Comes he in peace ? what wind hath blown him hither
 I less conjecture than when first I saw
 The sumptuous Dalila floating this way :
 His habit carries peace, his brow defiance.

SAMs. Or peace or not, alike to me he comes.

CHOR. His fraught we soon shall know, he now arrives.

HAR. I come not, Samson, to condole thy chance,
 As these perhaps, yet wish it had not been,
 Though for no friendly intent. I am of Gath,
 Men call me Harapha, of stock renown'd
 As Og or Anak and the Emims old
 That Kiriathaim held, thou know'st me now
 If thou at all art known. Much I have heard
 Of thy prodigious might and feats perform'd
 Incredible to me, in this displeas'd,
 'That I was never present on the place

Of those encounters, where we might have try'd
Each other's force in camp or lifted field:
And now am come to see of whom such noise
Hath walk'd about, and each limb to survey,
If thy appearance answer loud report.

SAMs. The way to know were not to see but taste.

HAR. Dost thou already single me? I thought
Gyves and the mill had tam'd thee. O that fortune
Had brought me to the field, where thou art fam'd
To have wrought such wonders with an afs's jaw;
I should have forc'd thee soon with other arms,
Or left thy carcass where the afs lay thrown:
So had the glory of prowess been recover'd
To Palestine, won by a Philistine
From the unfore-skin'd race, of whom thou bear'st
The highest name for valiant acts, that honour
Certain to have won by mortal duel from thee,
I lose, prevented by thy eyes put out. [but do

SAMs. Boast not of what thou wouldst have done,
What then thou wouldst, thou see'st it in thy hand.

HAR. To combat with a blind man I disdain,
And thou hast need much washing to be touch'd.

SAMs. Such usage as your honourable lords
Afford me assassinated and betray'd,
Who durst not with their whole united pow'rs
In fight withstand me single and unarm'd,
Nor in the house with chamber-ambushes
Close banded durst attack me, no not sleeping,
Till they had hir'd a woman with their gold
Breaking her marriage-faith to circumvent me.
Therefore without feign'd shifts let be assign'd
Some narrow place inclos'd, where fight may give thee,

Or rather flight, no great advantage on me;
 Then put on all thy gorgeous arms, thy helmet
 And brigandine of brags, thy broad habergeon,
 Vant-brags and greves, and gauntlet, add thy spear,
 A weaver's beam, and seven-times-folded shield;
 I only with an oaken staff will meet thee,
 And raise such out-cries on thy clatter'd iron,
 Which long shall not with-hold me from thy head,
 That in a little time while breath remains thee,
 Thou oft shalt with thyself at Gath to boast
 Again in safety what thou wouldst have done
 To Samson, but shalt never see Gath more.

HAR. Thou durst not thus disparage glorious arms
 Which greatest heroes have in battle worn,
 Their ornament and safety; had not spells
 And black enchantments, some magician's art, [heav'n
 Arm'd thee or charm'd thee strong, which thou from
 Feign'd'st at thy birth was giv'n thee in thy hair,
 Where strength can least abide, though all thy hairs
 Were bristles rang'd like those that ridge the back
 Of chaf'd wild boars, or ruffled porcupines.

SAMS. I know no spells, use no forbidden arts;
 My trust is in the living God, who gave me
 At my nativity this strength, diffus'd
 No less through all my sinews, joints and bones,
 Than thine, while I preserv'd these locks unshorn,
 The pledge of my unviolated vow.
 For proof hereof, if Dagon be thy god,
 Go to his temple, invoke his aid
 With solemnest devotion, spread before him
 How highly it concerns his glory now
 To frustrate and dissolve these magic spells,

Which I to be the pow'r of Israel's God
Avow, and challenge Dagon to the test,
Off'ring to combat thee his champion bold
With th' utmost of his godhead seconded:
Then thou shalt see, or rather to thy sorrow
Soon feel, whose God is strongest, thine or mine.

HAR. Presume not on thy God, whate'er he be,
Thee he regards not, owns not, hath cut off
Quite from his people, and deliver'd up
Into thy enemies hand, permitted them
To put out both thine eyes, and fetter'd send thee
Into the common prison, there to grind
Among the slaves and asses thy comrades,
As good for nothing else, no better service
With those thy boist'rous locks, no worthy match
For valour to assail, nor by the sword
Of noble warrior, so to stain his honour
But by the barber's razor best subdu'd.

SAMS. All these indignities, for such they are
From thine, these evils I deserve and more,
Acknowledge them from God inflicted on me
Justly, yet despair not of his final pardon,
Whose ear is ever open, and his eye
Gracious to re-admit the suppliant:
In confidence whereof, I once again
Defy thee to the trial of mortal fight,
By combat to decide whose god is God,
Thine or whom I with Israel's sons adore. [trusting

HAR. Fair honour that thou dost thy God, in
He will accept thee to defend his cause,
A murderer, a revolter, and a robber. [me these?

SAMS. Tongue-doughty giant, how dost thou prove

HAR. Is not thy nation subject to our lords?
Their magistrates confess'd it, when they took thee
As a league-breaker, and deliver'd bound
Into our hands : For hadst thou not committed
Notorious murder on those thirty men
At Askalon, who never did thee harm,
Then like a robber stripp'dst them of their robes?
The Philistines, when thou hadst broke the league,
Went up with armed pow'rs thee only seeking,
To others did no violence nor spoil.

SAMs. Among the daughters of the Philistines
I chose a wife, which argued me no foe;
And in your city held my nuptial feast:
But your ill-meaning politician lords,
Under pretence of bridal friends and guests,
Appointed to await me thirty spies,
Who threatning cruel death constrain'd the bride
To wring from me and tell to them my secret,
That solv'd the riddle which I had propos'd.
When I perceiv'd all set on enmity,
As on my enemies, where-ever chanc'd,
I us'd hostility, and took their spoil
To pay my underminers in their coin.
My nation was subjected to your lords.
It was the force of conquest; force with force
Is well ejected when the conquer'd can.
But I a private person, whom my country
As a league-breaker gave up bound, presum'd
Single rebellion, and did hostile acts.
I was no private but a person rais'd
With strength sufficient and command from heav'n
To free my country ; if their servile minds

Me their deliverer sent would not receive,
But to their masters gave me up for nought,
Th' unworthier they; whence to this day they serve.
I was to do my part from heav'n assign'd,
And had perform'd it, if my known offence
Had not disabl'd me, not all your force.
These shifts refuted, answer thy appellant,
Though by his blindness maim'd for high attempts,
Who now defies thee thrice to single fight,
As petty enterptise of small enforce.

HAR. With thee, a man condemn'd, a slave enroll'd,
Due by the law to capital punishment?
To fight with thee no man of arms will deign. [me,

SAMS. Cam'st thou for this, vain boaster, to survey
To descant on my strength, and give thy verdict?
Come nearer, part not hence so slight inform'd;
But take good heed my hand survey not thee.

HAR. O Baal-zebub! can my years unus'd
Hear these dishonours, and not render death?

SAMS. No man withhold's thee, nothing from thy hand
Fear I incurable; bring up thy van,
My heels are fetter'd, but my fist is free.

HAR. This insolence other kind of answer fits.

SAMS. Go baffl'd coward, lest I run upon thee,
Though in these chains, bulk without spirit vast,
And with one buffet lay thy structure low,
Or swing thee in the air, then dash thee down
'To th' hazard of thy brains and shatter'd sides.

HAR. By Astaroth, ere long thou shalt lament
These braveries in irons loaden on thee.

CHOR. His giant-ship is gone somewhat crest-fall'n,
Stalking with less unconscionable strides,

And lower looks, but in a sultry chafe.

SAMs. I dread him not, nor all his giant-brood,
Though fame divulge him father of five sons
All of gigantic size, Goliath chief.

CHOR. He will directly to the lords, I fear,
And with malicious counsel stir them up
Some way or other yet farther to afflict thee.

SAMs. He must alledge some cause, and offer'd fight
Will not dare mention, lest a question rise
Whether he durst accept th' offer or not,
And that he durst not plain enough appear'd.
Much more affliction than already felt
They cannot well impose, nor I sustain;
If they intend advantage of my labours,
The work of many hands, which earns my keeping
With no small profit daily to my owners.
But come what will, my deadliest foe will prove
My speediest friend, by death to rid me hence,
The worst that he can give, to me the best.
Yet so it may fall out, because their end
Is hate, not help to me, it may with mine
Draw their own ruin who attempt the deed.

CHOR. Oh how comely it is, and how reviving
To the spirits of just men long oppress'd!
When God into the hands of their deliverer
Puts invincible might
To quell the mighty of the earth, th' oppressor,
'The brute and boist'rous force of violent men
Hardy and industrious to support
Tyrannic power, but raging to pursue
The righteous, and all such as honour truth;
He all their ammunition

And feats of war defeats
With plain heroic magnitude of mind
And celestial vigour arm'd,
Their armories and magazines contemns,
Renders them useless, while
With winged expedition,
Swift as the light'ning glance, he executes
His errand on the wicked, who surpriz'd
Lose their defence distracted and amaz'd.

But patience is more oft the exercise
Of saints, the trial of their fortitude,
Making them each his own deliverer,
And victor over all
That tyranny or fortune can inflict.
Either of these is in thy lot,
Samson, with might endu'd
Above the sons of men; but sight bereav'd
May chance to number thee with those
Whom patience finally must crown.

This idol's day hath been to thee no day of rest,
Labouring thy mind
More than the working day thy hands.
And yet perhaps more trouble is behind,
For I descry this way
Some other tending, in his hand
A scepter or quaint staff he bears,
Comes on amain, speed in his look.
By his habit I discern him now
A public officer, and now at hand.
His message will be short and voluble.

OFF. Hebrews, the pris'ner Samson here I seek.

CHOR. His manacles remark him, there he sits.

OFF. Samson, to thee our lords thus bid me say;
 This day to Dagon is a solemn feast,
 With sacrifices, triumph, pomp, and games;
 Thy strength they know surpassing human rate,
 And now some public proof thereof require
 To honour this great feast, and great assembly;
 Rise therefore with all speed and come along,
 Where I will see thee hearten'd and fresh clad
 To appear as fits before th' illustrious lords. [them,

SAMs. Thou know'st I am an Hebrew, therefore tell
 Our law forbids at their religious rites
 My presence; for that cause I cannot come.

OFF. This answer, be assur'd, will not content them.

SAMs. Have they not sword-players, and ev'ry sort
 Of gymnic artists, wrestlers, riders, runners,
 Juglers and dancers, antics, mummers, mimics,
 But they must pick me out with shackles tir'd,
 And over-labour'd at their public mill,
 To make them sport with blind activity?
 Do they not seek occasion of new quarrels
 On my refusal to distress me more,
 Or make a game of my calamities?
 Return the way thou cam'st, I will not come.

OFF. Regard thyself, this will offend them highly.

SAMs. Myself? my conscience and internal peace.
 Can they think me so broken, so debas'd
 With corporal servitude, that my mind ever
 Will condescend to such absurd commands?
 Although their drudge, to be their fool or jester,
 And in my midst of sorrow and heart-grief
 To shew them feats, and play before their god,
 The worst of all indignities, yet on me

Join'd with extreme contempt? I will not come.

OFF. My message was impos'd on me with speed,
Brooks no delay: Is this thy resolution?

SAMs. So take it with what speed thy message needs.

OFF. I am sorry what this stoutness will produce.

SAMs. Perhaps thou shalt have cause to sorrow indeed.

CHOR. Consider, Samson, matters now are strain'd
Up to the height, whether to hold or break;
He's gone, and who knows how he may report
Thy words by adding fuel to the flame?
Expect another message more imperious,
More lordly thund'ring than thou well wilt bear.

SAMs. Shall I abuse this consecrated gift
Of strength, again returning with my hair
After my great transgression, so requite
Favour renew'd, and add a greater sin
By prostituting holy things to idols;
A Nazarite in place abominable
Vaunting my strength in honour to their Dagon?
Besides how vile, contemptible, ridiculous,
What act more execrably unclean, profane?

CHOR. Yet with this strength thou serv'st the Phil-
Idolatrous, uncircumcis'd, unclean. [stines.

SAMs. Not in their idol-worship, but by labour
Honest and lawful to deserve my food
Of those who have me in their civil power. [not.

CHOR. Where the heart joins not, outward acts defile

SAMs. Where outward force constrains, the sentence
But who constrains me to the temple of Dagon, [holds.
Not dragging? the Philistian lords command.
Commands are no constraints. If I obey them,
I do it freely, vent'ring to displease

God for the fear of man, and man prefer,
 Set God behind : Which in his jealousy
 Shall never, unrepented, find forgiveness.
 Yet that he may dispense with me or thee
 Present in temples at idolatrous rites

For some important cause, thou need'st not doubt.

CHOR. How thou wilt here come off surmounts my
 SAMs. Be of good courage, I begin to feel [reach.
 Some rousing motions in me, which dispose
 To something extraordinary my thoughts.
 I with this messenger will go along,
 Nothing to do, be sure, that may dishonour
 Our law, or stain my vow of Nazarite.
 If there be aught of presage in the mind,
 This day will be remarkable in my life
 By some great act, or of my days the last.

CHOR. In time thou hast resolv'd, the man returns.

OFF. Samson this second message from our lords
 To thee I am bid say. Art thou our slave,
 Our captive, at the public mill our drudge,
 And dar'st thou at our sending and command
 Dispute thy coming? come without delay;
 Or we shall find such engines to assail
 And hamper thee, as thou shalt come of force,
 Though thou wert firmlier fasten'd than a rock.

SAMs. I could be well content to try their art,
 Which to no few of them would prove pernicious.
 Yet knowing their advantages too many,
 Because they shall not trail me through their streets
 Like a wild beast, I am content to go.
 Masters commands come with power resistless
 To such as owe them absolute subjection :

And for a life who will not change his purpose?

(So mutable are all the ways of men)

Yet this be sure, in nothing to comply

Scandalous or forbidden in our law.

OFF. I praise thy resolution; doff these links:

By this compliance thou wilt win the lords

To favour, and perhaps to set thee free.

SAMs. Brethren farewell, your company along

I will not with, lest it perhaps offend them

To see me girt with friends; and how the sight

Of me as of a common enemy,

So dreaded once, may now exasperate them,

I know not: Lords are lordliest in their wine;

And the well-feasted priest then soonest fir'd

With zeal, if aught religion seem concern'd;

No less the people on their holy days

Impetuous, insolent, unquenchable:

Happ'n what may, of me expect to hear

Nothing dishonourable, impure, unworthy

Our God, our law, my nation or myself,

The last of me or no I cannot warrant.

CHOR. Go, and the Holy One

Of Israel be thy guide

To what may serve his glory best, and spread his name

Great among the heathen round;

Send thee the angel of thy birth to stand,

Fast by thy side, who from thy father's field

Rode up in flames after his message told

Of thy conception, and be now a shield

Of fire; that spirit that first rush'd on thee

In the camp of Dan

Be efficacious in thee now at need.

For never was from heaven imparted
 Measure of strength so great to mortal feed,
 As in thy wond'rous actions hath been seen.
 But wherefore comes old Manoa in such haste
 With youthful steps? much livelier than ere while
 He seems: Supposing here to find his son,
 Or of him bringing to us some glad news?

MAN. Peace with you, brethren; my inducement hither
 Was not at present here to find my son, [ther
 By order of the lords new parted hence
 To come and play before them at their feast.
 I heard all as I came, the city rings,
 And numbers thither flock, I had no will,
 Lest I should see him forc'd to things unseemly:
 But that which mov'd my coming now was chiefly
 To give you part with me what hope I have
 With good success to work his liberty.

CHOR. That hope would much rejoice us to partake
 With thee; say, reverend sire, we thirst to hear.

MAN. I have attempted one by one the lords
 Either at home, or through the high-street passing,
 With supplication prone and father's tears,
 T' accept of ransom for my son their pris'ner.
 Some much averſe I found and wondrous harsh,
 Contemptuous, proud, set on revenge and spite;
 That part most reverenc'd Dagon and his priests:
 Others more moderate seeming, but their aim
 Private reward; for which both God and state
 They easily would set to sale; a third
 More generous far and civil, who confess'd
 They had enough reveng'd, having reduc'd
 Their foe to misery beneath their fears,

The rest was magnanimity to remit,
If some convenient ransom was propos'd.
What noise or shout was that? it tore the sky.

CHOR. Doubtless the people shouting to behold
Their once great dread, captive, and blind before them,
Or at some proof of strength before them shown.

MAN. His ransom, if my whole inheritance
May compass it, shall willingly be paid
And number'd down : Much rather I shall chuse
To live the poorest in my tribe, than richest,
And he in that calamitous prison left.
No, I am fix'd not to part hence without him ;
For his redemption all my patrimony,
If need be, I am ready to forego
And quit : Not wanting him, I shall want nothing.

CHOR. Fathers are wont to lay up for their sons,
Thou for thy son are bent to lay out all ;
Sons wont to nurse their parents in old age,
Thou in old age car'st how to nurse thy son,
Made older than thy age through eye-sight lost.

MAN. It shall be my delight to tend his eyes,
And view him sitting in the house, ennobled
With all those high exploits by him achiev'd,
And on his shoulders waving down those locks,
That of a nation arm'd the strength contain'd :
And I persuade me God had not permitted
His strength again to grow up with his hair
Garrison'd round about him like a camp
Of faithful soldiery, were not his purpose
To use him farther yet in some great service,
Not to sit idle with so great a gift
Useless, and thence ridiculous about him.

And since his strength with eye-sight was not lost,
God will restore him eye-sight to his strength.

CHOR. Thy hopes are not ill founded, nor seem
Of his delivery, and thy joy thereon [vain
Conceiv'd, agreeable to a father's love,
In both which we, as next, participate. [noise!

MAN. I know your friendly minds and-----O what
Mercy of heav'n, what hideous noise was that!
Horribly loud, unlike the former shout.

CHOR. Noise call you it, or universal groan,
As if the whole inhabitation perish'd!
Blood, death, and deathful deeds are in that noise,
Ruin, destruction at the utmost point.

MAN. Of ruin indeed methought I heard the noise.
Oh it continues, they have slain my son.

CHOR. Thy son is rather slaying them, that out-cry
From slaughter of one foe could not ascend.

MAN. Some dismal accident it needs must be;
What shall we do, stay here or run and see?

CHOR. Best keep together here, lest running thither
We unawares run into danger's mouth.
This evil on the Philistines is fall'n;
From whom could else a general cry be heard?
The sufferers then will scarce molest us here,
From other hands we need not much to fear.
What if his eye-sight (for to Israel's God
Nothing is hard) by miracle restor'd,
He now be dealing dole among his foes,
And over heaps of slaughter'd walk his way?

MAN. That were a joy presumptuous to be thought.

CHOR. Yet God hath wrought things as incredible
For his people of old; what hinders now?

MAN. He can, I know, but doubt to think he will;
Yet hope would fain subscribe, and tempts belief.
A little stay will bring some notice hither.

CHOR. Of good or bad, so great, of bad the sooner;
For evil news rides post, while good news baits.
And to our wish I see one hither speeding,
An Hebrew, as I guess, and of our tribe.

MESS. O whither shall I run, or which way fly
The sight of this so horrid spectacle,
Which erst my eyes beheld and yet behold?
For dire imagination still pursues me.
But providence or instinct of nature seems,
Or reason, though disturb'd, and scarce consulted,
To have guided me aright, I know not how,
To thee first reverend Manoa, and to these
My countrymen, whom here I knew remaining,
As at some distance from the place of horror,
So in the sad event too much concern'd. [thee

MAN. The accident was loud, and here before
With rueful cry, yet what it was we hear not;
No preface needs, thou see'st we long to know.

MESS. It would burst forth, but I recover breath
And sense distract, to know well what I utter.

MAN. Tell us the sum, the circumstance defer.

MESS. Gaza yet stands, but all her sons are fall'n,
All in a moment overwhelm'd and fall'n. [faddest

MAN. Sad, but thou know'st to Israelites not
The desolation of a hostile city. [surfeit.

MESS. Feed on that first, there may in grief be

MAN. Relate by whom.

MESS. By Samson.

MAN. That still lessens

The sorrow, and converts it nigh to joy.

MESS. Ah Manoa, I refrain, too suddenly
To utter what will come at last too soon,
Lest evil tidings with too rude irruption
Hitting thy aged ear should pierce too deep.

MAN. Suspense in news is torture, speak them out.

MESS. Take then the worst in brief, Samson is dead.

MAN. The worst indeed; O all my hope's defeated
To free him hence! but death who sets all free
Hath paid his ransom now and full discharge.
What windy joy this day had I conceiv'd
Hopeful of his delivery, which now proves
Abortive as the first-born bloom of spring
Nipp'd with the lagging rear of winter's frost.
Yet ere I give the reins to grief, say first,
How dy'd he? death to life is crown or shame.
All by him fell, thou say'st, by whom fell he?
What glorious hand gave Samson his death's wound?

MESS. Unwounded of his enemies he fell.

MAN. Wearied with slaughter then, or how? ex-

MESS. By his own hands. [plain.

MAN. Self-violence? what cause
Brought him so soon at variance with himself
Among his foes?

MESS. Inevitable cause
At once both to destroy and be destroy'd;
The edifice where all were met to see him,
Upon their heads and on his own he pull'd.

MAN. O lastly over-strong against thyself!
A dreadful way thou took'st to thy revenge.
More than enough we know; but while things yet
Are in confusion, give us, if thou canst,

Eye-witness of what first or last was done,
Relation more particular and distinct.

ME ss. Occasions drew me early to this city,
And as the gates I enter'd with sun-rise,
The morning trumpets festival proclaim'd
Through each high street: Little I had dispatch'd,
When all abroad was rumour'd that this day
Samson should be brought forth, to shew the people
Proof of his mighty strength in feats and games.
I sorrow'd at his captive state, but minded
Not to be absent at that spectacle.
The building was a spacious theatre
Half round on two main pillars vaulted high,
With seats where all the lords and each degree
Of fort, might sit in order to behold;
The other side was open, where the throng
On banks and scaffolds under sky might stand;
I among those aloof obscurely stood.
The feast and noon grew high, and sacrifice [wine,
Had fill'd their hearts with mirth, high chear, and
When to their sports they turn'd. Immediately
Was Samson as a public servant brought,
In their state-livery clad; before him pipes
And timbrels, on each side went armed guards,
Both horse and foot, before him and behind,
Archers and slingers, cataphracts and spears.
At sight of him the people with a shout
Rifted the air, clamouring their god with praise,
Who had made their dreadful enemy their thrall.
He patient, but undaunted, where they led him,
Came to the place, and what was set before him
Which without help of eye might be assay'd

To heave, pull, draw, or break, he still perform'd
All with incredible, stupenduous force,
None daring to appear antagonist.
At length, for intermission sake, they led him
Between the pillars; he his guide requested
(For so from such as nearer stood we heard)
As over-tir'd, to let him lean a while
With both his arms on those two massy pillars,
That to the arched roof gave main support.
He unsuspecting led him; which when Samson
Felt in his arms, with head a while inclin'd,
And eyes fast fix'd, he stood as one who pray'd,
Or some great matter in his mind revolv'd:
At last with head erect thus cry'd aloud,
Hitherto, lords, what your commands impos'd
I have perform'd, as reason was, obeying,
Not without wonder or delight beheld:
Now of my own accord such other trial
I mean to shew you of my strength, yet greater,
As with amaze shall strike all who behold.
This utter'd, straining all his nerves, he bow'd,
As with the force of winds and water pent,
When mountains tremble, those two massy pillars
With horrible convulsion to and fro,
He tugg'd, he shook, till down they came, and drew
The whole roof after them, with burst of thunder
Upon the heads of all who sat beneath,
Lords, ladies, captains, counsellors, or priests,
Their choice nobility and flower, not only
Of this, but each Philistian city round,
Met from all parts to solemnize this feast.
Samson with these inmix'd, inevitably

Pull'd down the same destruction on himself;
The vulgar only 'scap'd who stood without.

CHOR. O dearly bought revenge, yet glorious!
Living or dying thou hast fulfill'd
The work for which thou wast foretold
To Israel, and now ly'st victorious
Among thy slain self-kill'd
Not willingly, but tangl'd in the fold
Of dire necessity, whose law in death conjoin'd
Thee with thy slaughter'd foes in number more
Than all thy life had slain before. [sublime,

SEMICHOR. While their hearts were jocund and
Drunk with idolatry, drunk with wine,
And fat regorg'd of bulls and goats,
Chaunting their idol, and preferring
Before our living Dread who dwells
In Silo his bright sanctuary :
Among them he a spirit of phrenzy sent,
Who hurt their minds,
And urg'd them on with mad desire
To call in haste for their destroyer ;
They only set on sport and play,
Unweetingly importun'd
Their own destruction to come speedy upon them,
So fond are mortal men,
Fall'n into wrath divine,
As their own ruin on themselves t'invite,
Insensate left, or to sense reprobate,
And with blindness internal struck.

SEMICHOR. But he though blind of sight,
Despis'd and thought extinguish'd quite,
With inward eyes illuminated,

His fiery virtue rous'd
 From under ashes into sudden flame,
 And as an ev'ning dragon came,
 Assailant on the perched roosts,
 And nests in order rang'd
 Of tame villatic fowl; but as an eagle,
 His cloudless thunder bolted on their heads.
 So virtue giv'n for lost,
 Deprest, and overthrown, as seem'd,
 Like that self-begott'n bird
 In th' Arabian woods embost,
 That no second knows nor third,
 And lay ere while a holocaust,
 From out her ashy womb now teem'd,
 Revives, reffourishes, then vigorous most
 When most unactive deem'd,
 And though her body die, her fame survives,
 A secular bird ages of lives.

MAN. Come, come, no time for lamentation now,
 Nor much more cause; Samson hath quit himself
 Like Samson, and heroically hath finish'd
 A life heroic, on his enemies
 Fully reveng'd, hath left them years of mourning,
 And lamentation to the sons of Caphtor
 Through all Philistian bounds: To Israel
 Honour hath left, and freedom, let but them
 Find courage to lay hold on this occasion;
 To himself and father's house eternal fame;
 And, which is best and happiest yet, all this
 With God not parted from him, as was fear'd,
 But favouring and assisting to the end.
 Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail

Or knock the breast, no weakness, no contempt,
Dispraise, or blame, nothing but well and fair,
And what may quiet us in a death so noble.
Let us go find the body where it lies
Sok'd in his enemies blood, and from the stream
With lavers pure and cleansing herbs wash off
The clotted gore. I with what speed the while
(Gaza is not in plight to say us nay)
Will fend for all my kindred, all my friends,
To fetch him hence, and solemnly attend
With silent obsequy and funeral train
Home to his father's house: There will I build him
A monument, and planted round with shade
Of laurel ever-green, and branching palm,
With all his trophies hung, and acts enroll'd
In copious legend, or sweet lyric song.
Thither shall all the valiant youth resort,
And from his memory inflame their breasts
To matchless valour, and adventures high:
The virgins also shall on feastful days
Visit his tomb with flowers, only bewailing
His lot unfortunate in nuptial choice,
From whence captivity and loss of eyes.

CHOR. All is best, though we oft doubt
What th' unsearchable dispose
Of highest wisdom brings about,
And ever best found in the close.
Oft he seems to hide his face,
But unexpectedly returns,
And to his faithful champion hath in place
Bore witness gloriously; whence Gaza mourns

And all that band them to resist
His uncontrollable intent;
His servant he with new acquit
Of true experience from this great event
With peace and consolation hath dismiss,
And calm of mind all passion spent.

T H E E N D.

C O M U S,

A

M A S K.

P R E S E N T E D

AT LUDLOW-CASTLE, M,DC,XXXIV.

B E F O R E

The EARL of Bridgewater, then President
of WALES.

41 HANSON AGONISTES

And all the world to see

His glorious name

His name is **U M O C**

His name is **U M O C**

His name is **U M O C**

His name is **U M O C**

A

MA LA 8 H

P A S S E N T E D

AT LUDLOW-CASTLE, MONTGOMERY

P A S S E N T E D

The Earl of Montgomery, Sheriff

of Wales

The PERFECT

COMES with his crew.

The P E R S O N S.

The attendant Spirit, afterwards in the habit of
Thyrsis.

COMUS with his crew.

The L A D Y.

1 BROTHER.

2 BROTHER.

S A B R I N A the nymph.

The chief persons who presented, were,

The Lord B R A C K L Y.

Mr T H O M A S E G E R T O N his brother.

The Lady A L I C E E G E R T O N.

C O M U S,

A

M A S K.

The first Scene discovers a wild Wood.

The attendant Spirit descends or enters.

BEFORE the starry threshold of Jove's court
My mansion is, where those immortal shapes
Of bright aerial spirits live inspher'd
In regions mild of calm and serene air,
Above the smoak and stir of this dim spot,
Which men call Earth, and with low-thoughted care
Confin'd, and pester'd in this pin-fold here,
Strive to keep up a frail and feverish being,
Unmindful of the crown that virtue gives,
After this mortal change, to her true servants
Amongst the enthron'd gods on fainted seats.
Yet some there be that by due steps aspire
To lay their just hands on that golden key,
That ope's the palace of eternity :
To such my errand is; and but for such,
I would not foil these pure ambrosial weeds
With the rank vapours of this sin-worn mould.

But to my task. Neptune, besides the sway
Of ev'ry salt flood, and each ebbing stream,

Took in by lot 'twixt high and nether Jove,
Imperial rule of all the sea-girt isles,
That like to rich and various gemms inlay
The unadorned bosom of the deep,
Which he to grace his tributary gods
By course commits to several government,
And gives them leave to wear their saphire crowns,
And wield their little tridents ; but this Isle,
The greatest and the best of all the main,
He quarters to his blue-hair'd dieties,
And all this tract that fronts the falling sun
A noble peer of mickle trust and power
Has in his charge, with temper'd awe to guide
An old, and haughty nation proud in arms :
Where his fair offspring nurs'd in princely lore,
Are coming to attend their father's state,
And new-entrusted sceptre ; but their way
Lies through the perplex'd paths of this drear wood,
The nodding horror of whose shady brows
Threats the forlorn and wandring passenger ;
And here their tender age might suffer peril,
But that by quick command from sovereign Jove
I was dispatch'd for their defence and guard ;
And listen why, for I will tell you now
What never yet was heard in tale or song,
From old or modern bard, in hall or bower.

Bacchus, that first from out the purple grape
Crush'd the sweet poison of misused wine,
After the Tuscan mariners transform'd,
Coasting the Tyrrhene shore, as the winds list'd,
On Circe's island fell ; (who knows not Circe
The daughter of the sun ? whose charmed cup

Whoever tasted, lost his upright shape,
And downward fell into a groveling swine)
This nymph that gaz'd upon his clustring locks,
With ivy berries wreath'd, and his blithe youth,
Had by him, ere he parted thence, a son
Much like his father, but his mother more,
Whom therefore she brought up, and Comus nam'd,
Who ripe, and frolic of his full grown age,
Roving the Celtic and Iberian fields,
At last betakes him to this ominous wood,
And in thick shelter of black shades imbowl'd
Excells his mother at her mighty art,
Off'ring to every weary traveller
His orient liquor in a crystal glass,
To quench the drouth of Phoebus, which as they taste
(For most do taste through fond intemperate thirst)
Soon as the potion works, their human count'nance,
Th' express resemblance of the gods, is chang'd
Into some brutish form of wolf, or bear,
Or ounce, or tiger, hog, or bearded goat,
All other parts remaining as they were ;
And they, so perfect is their misery,
Not once perceive their foul disfigurement,
But boast themselves more comely than before,
And all their friends and native home forget,
To roll with pleasure in a sensual sty.
Therefore when any favour'd of high Jove
Chances to pass through this adventurous glade,
Swift as the sparkle of a glancing star
I shoot from heav'n, to give him safe convoy,
As now I do : But first I must put off
These my sky robes spun out of Iris wooff,

And take the weeds and likeness of a swain
 That to the service of this house belongs,
 Who with his soft pipe, and smooth-dittied song,
 Well knows to still the wild winds when they roar,
 And hush the waving woods, nor of less faith,
 And in this office of his mountain watch,
 Likeliest, and nearest to the present aid
 Of this occasion. But I hear the tread
 Of hateful steps. I must be viewless now.

*Comus enters with a charming rod in one hand, his glass
 in the other ; with him a rout of monsters, headed like
 sundry sorts of wild beasts, but otherwise like men and
 women, their apparel glist'ring ; they come in making
 a riotous and unruly noise, with torches in their hands.*

COMUS. The star that bids the shepherd fold,
 Now the top of heav'n doth hold,
 And the gilded car of day
 His glowing axle doth allay
 In the steep Atlantic stream,
 And the slope sun his upward beam
 Shoots against the dusky pole,
 Pacing toward the other goal
 Of his chamber in the east.
 Mean while welcome joy, and feast,
 Midnight shout, and revelry,
 Tipsey dance, and jollity.
 Braid your locks with rosy twine,
 Dropping odours, dropping wine.
 Rigour now is gone to bed,
 And Advice with scrupulous head ;

Strict Age, and four Severity,
With their grave saws in slumber lie.
We that are of purer fire
Imitate the starry quire,
Who in their nightly watchful spheres,
Lead in swift round the months and years.
The sounds and seas, with all their finny drove,
Now to the moon in wavering morrice move;
And on the tawny sands and shelves,
Trip the pert fairies and the dapper elves.
By dimpled brook, and fountain brim,
The wood-nymphs deck'd with daisies trim,
Their merry wakes and pastimes keep :
What hath night to do with sleep ?
Night hath better sweets to prove,
Venus now wakes, and wak'ns Love.
Come let us our rites begin,
'Tis only day-light that makes sin,
Which these dun shades will ne'er report.
Hail Goddess of nocturnal sport,
Dark veil'd Cotytto, t' whom the secret flame
Of midnight torches burns; mysterious dame,
That ne'er art call'd, but when the dragon womb
Of Stygian darkness spits her thickest gloom,
And makes one blot of all the air,
Stay thy cloudy ebony chair,
Wherein thou rid'st with Hecat', and befriend
Us thy vow'd priests, till utmost end
Of all thy dues be done, and none left out,
Ere the blabbing eastern scout,
The nice morn on th' Indian steep
From her cabin'd loophole peep,

And to the tell-tale fun descry
Our conceal'd solemnity.
Come, knit hands, and beat the ground
In a light fantastic round.

The Measure.

Break off, break off, I feel the different pace
Of some chaste footing near about this ground.
Run to your shrouds, within these brakes and trees;
Our number may affright : Some virgin's fure
(For so I can distinguish by mine art)
Benighted in these woods. Now to my charms,
And to my wily trains ; I shall ere long
Be well-stock'd with as fair a herd as graz'd
About my mother Circe. Thus I hurl
My dazzling spells into the spongy air,
Of power to cheat the eye with blear illusion,
And give it false presentments, lest the place
And my quaint habits breed astonishment,
And put the damsel to suspicious flight,
Which must not be, for that's against my course ;
I under fair pretence of friendly ends,
And well-plac'd words of glozing courtesy,
Baited with reasons not unplaussible,
Wind me into the easy-hearted man,
And hug him into snares. When once her eye
Hath met the virtue of this magic dust,
I shall appear some harmless villager,
Whom thrift keeps up about his country gear.
But here she comes, I fairly step aside
And hearken, if I may, her business here.

The Lady enters.

This way the noise was, if mine ear be true,
My best guide now; methought it was the sound
Of riot, and ill manag'd merriment,
Such as the jocund flute, or gamefome pipe
Stirs up among the loose unletter'd hinds,
When for their teeming flocks, and granges full,
In wanton dance they praise the bounteous Pan,
And thank the gods amiss. I should be loth
To meet the rudeness, and swill'd insolence
Of such late wassailers; yet O where else
Shall I inform my unacquainted feet
In the blind mazes of this tangl'd wood?
My brothers when they saw me wearied out
With this long way, resolving here to lodge
Under the spreading favour of these pines,
Stept, as they said, to the next thicket side
To bring me berries, or such cooling fruit
As the kind hospitable woods provide.
They left me then, when the gray-hooded ev'n
Like a sad votarist in palmers weed,
Rose from the hindmost wheels of Phoebus' wain.
But where they are, and why they came not back,
Is now the labour of my thoughts, 'tis likeliest
They had engag'd their wandring steps too far,
And envious darkness, ere they could return,
Had stole them from me; else, O thievish Night,
Why should'st thou, but for some felonious end,
In thy dark lantern thus close up the stars,
'That nature hung in heav'n, and fill'd their lamps
With everlasting oil, to give due light
To the misled and lonely traveller?

This is the place, as well as I may guess,
Whence ev'n now the tumult of loud mirth
Was rise, and perfect in my list'ning ear,
Yet nought but single darkness do I find.
What might this be? a thousand fantasies
Begin to throng into my memory
Of calling shapes, and beck'ning shadows dire,
And airy tongues, that syllable mens names
On sands, and shores, and desert wildernesses.
These thoughts may startle well, but not astound
The virtuous mind, that ever walks attended
By a strong siding champion, conscience.---
O welcome pure-ey'd Faith, white-handed Hope,
Thou hovering angel girt with golden wings,
And thou unblemish'd form of Chastity;
I see ye visibly, and now believe
That he, the Supreme Good, t' whom all things ill
Are but as slavish officers of vengeance,
Would send a glist'ring guardian if need were
To keep my life and honour unassail'd.
Was I deceiv'd, or did a fable cloud
Turn forth her silver lining on the night?
I did not err, there does a fable cloud
Turn forth her silver lining on the night,
And casts a gleam over this tufted grove.
I cannot hallow to my brothers, but
Such noise as I can make to be heard farthest
I'll venture, for my new enliv'ned spirits
Prompt me; and they perhaps are not far off.

S O N G.

*SWEET Echo, sweetest nymph, that liv'st unseen
 Within thy airy shell,
 By slow Meander's margent green,
 And in the violet-embroider'd vale,
 Where the love lorn nightingale
 Nightly to thee her sad song mourneth well ;
 Canst thou not tell me of a gentle pair
 That likest thy Narcissus are ?
 O if thou have
 Hid them in some flow'ry cave,
 Tell me but where,
 Sweet queen of parly, daughter of the sphere,
 So may'st thou be translated to the skies,
 And give resounding grace to all heav'n's harmonies.*

COMUS. Can any mortal mixture of earth's mould
 Breathe such divine enchanting ravishment ?
 Sure something holy lodges in that breast,
 And with these raptures moves the vocal air
 To testify his hidden residence :
 How sweetly did they float upon the wings
 Of silence, through the empty-vaulted night,
 At ev'ry fall smoothing the raven down
 Of darkness till it smil'd ! I have oft heard
 My mother Circe with the Sirens three,
 Amidst the flowry-kirtl'd Naiades,
 Culling their potent herbs, and baleful drugs,
 Who as they sung, would take the prison'd soul,
 And lap it in Elysium ; Scylla wept,
 And chid her barking waves into attention,
 And fell Charybdis murmur'd soft applause ;

Yet they in pleasing slumber lull'd the sense,
 And in sweet madness robb'd it of itself;
 But such a sacred, and home-felt delight,
 Such sober certainty of waking bliss
 I never heard till now. I'll speak to her,
 And she shall be my queen. Hail foreign wonder,
 Whom certain these rough shades did never breed,
 Unless the goddess that in rural shrine
 Dwell'st here with Pan, or Sylvan, by blest song
 Forbidding every bleak unkindly fog
 To touch the prosperous growth of this tall wood.

L.A. Nay, gentle shepherd, ill is lost that praise
 That is addrest to unattending ears;
 Not any boast of skill, but extreme shift
 How to regain my sever'd company,
 Compell'd me to awake the courteous Echo
 To give me answer from her mossy couch.

Co. What chance, good lady, hath bereft you thus?

L.A. dim darkness, and this leafy labyrinth.

Co. Could that divide you from near ushering guides?

L.A. They left me weary on a grassy turf.

Co. By falsehood, or discourtesy, or why?

L.A. To seek i' th' valley some cool friendly spring.

Co. And left your fair side all unguarded, lady?

L.A. They were but twain, and purpos'd quick return.

Co. Perhaps forestalling night prevented them.

L.A. How easy my misfortune is to hit!

Co. Imports their loss, beside the present need?

L.A. No less than if I should my brothers lose.

Co. Were they of manly prime, or youthful bloom?

L.A. As smooth as Hebe's their unrazor'd lips.

Co. Two such I saw, what time the labour'd ox

In his loose traces from the furrow came,
 And the swink't hedger at his supper fat;
 I saw them under a green mantling vine
 That crawls along the side of yon small hill,
 Plucking ripe clusters from the tender shoots;
 Their port was more than human, as they stood:
 I took it for a fairy vision
 Of some gay creatures of the element,
 That in the colours of the rainbow live,
 And play i' th' plighted clouds. I was awe-struck,
 And as I past, I worship'd; if those you seek,
 It were a journey like the path to heav'n,
 To help you find them.

LA. Gentle villager,
 What readiest way would bring me to that place?

Co. Due west it rises from this shrubby point.

LA. To find out that, good shepherd, I suppose,
 In such a scant allowance of star-light,
 Would over-task the best land-pilot's art,
 Without the sure guesses of well practis'd feet.

Co. I know each lane, and every alley green,
 Dingle, or bushy den of this wild wood,
 And every bosky bourn from side to side,
 My daily walks and ancient neighbourhood;
 And if your stray-attendance be yet lodg'd,
 Or shroud within these limits, I shall know
 Ere morrow wake, or the low-roosted lark
 From her thatch'd pallat rowse; if otherwise
 I can conduct you, lady, to a low
 But loyal cottage, where you may be safe
 Till further quest.

LA. Shepherd, I take thy word,

And trust thy honest offer'd courtesy,
 Which oft is sooner found in lowly sheds
 With smoaky rafters, than in tap'stry halls
 And courts of princes, where it first was nam'd,
 And yet is most pretended: In a place
 Less warranted than this, or less secure,
 I cannot be, that I should fear to change it.
 Eye me, blest Providence, and square my trial
 To my proportion'd strength. Shepherd, lead on.

The two Brothers.

ELD. BRO. Unmuffle ye faint stars, and thou fair
 That wont'st to love the travellers benizon, [moon,
 Stoop thy pale visage through an amber cloud,
 And disinherit Chaos, that reigns here
 In double night of darkness and of shades;
 Or, if your influence be quite damm'd up
 With black usurping mists, some gentle taper,
 Though a rush candle from the wicker hole
 Of some clay habitation, visit us
 With thy long levell'd rule of streaming light,
 And thou shalt be our star of Arcady,
 Or Tyrian Cynosure.

2 BRO. Or if our eyes
 Be barr'd that happiness, might we but hear
 The folded flocks penn'd in their watled cotes,
 Or sound of pastoral reed with oaten stops,
 Or whistle from the lodge, or village-cock
 Count the night-watches to his feathery dames,
 'Twould be some solace yet, some little chearing
 In this close dungeon of innumerable boughs.

But O that hapless virgin, our lost sister !
Where may she wander now, whither betake her
From the chill dew, amongst rude burs and thistles ?
Perhaps some cold bank is her bolster now,
Or 'gainst the rugged bark of some broad elm
Leans her unpillow'd head, fraught with sad fears.
What if in wild amazement, and affright,
Or, while we speak, within the direful grasp
Of savage hunger, or of savage heat ?

ELD. BRO. Peace, brother, be not over-exquisite
To cast the fashion of uncertain evils ?
For grant they be so, while they rest unknown,
What need a man forestall his date of grief,
And run to meet what he would most avoid ?
Or if they be but false alarms of fear,
How bitter is such self-delusion ?
I do not think my sister so to seek,
Or so unprincipled in virtue's book,
And the sweet peace that goodness bosoms ever,
As that the single want of light and noise
(Not being in danger, as I trust she is not)
Could still the constant mood of her calm thoughts,
And put them into this mis-becoming plight.
Virtue could see to do what virtue would
By her own radiant light, though sun and moon
Were in the flat sea sunk. And wisdom's self
Oft seeks to sweet retired solitude,
Where with her best nurse contemplation
She plumes her feathers, and lets grow her wings,
That in the various bustle of resort
Were all too ruffled, and sometimes impair'd.
He that has light within his own clear breast

May sit i' th' center, and enjoy bright day;
But he that hides a dark soul, and foul thoughts,
Benighted walks under the mid-day sun;
Himself is his own dungeon.

2. BRO. 'Tis most true,
That musing meditation most affects
The pensive secrecy of desert cell,
Far from the chearful haunt of men and herds,
And sits as safe as in a senate-house;
For who would rob a hermit of his weeds,
His few books, or his beads, or maple dish,
Or do his gray hairs any violence?
But beauty, like the fair Hesperian tree
Laden with blooming gold, had need the guard
Of dragon-watch with uninchanted eye,
To save her blossoms, and defend her fruit
From the rash hand of bold incontinence.
You may as well spread out the unfunn'd heaps
Of misers treasure by an outlaw's den,
And tell me it is safe, as bid me hope
Danger will wink on opportunity,
And let a single helpless maiden pass
Uninjur'd in this wild surrounding waste.
Of night, or loneliness, it recks me not,
I fear the dread events that dog them both,
Lest some ill-greeting touch attempt the person
Of our unowned sister.

ELD. BRO. I do not, brother,
Infer, as if I thought my sister's state
Secure without all doubt, or controversy:
Yet where an equal poise of hope and fear
Does arbitrate th' event, my nature is

That I incline to hope, rather than fear,
 And gladly banish squint suspicion.
 My sister is not so defenceless left
 As you imagine, she has a hidden strength
 Which you remember not.

2. BRO. What hidden strength,
 Unless the strength of heav'n, if you mean that?

ELD. BRO. I mean that too, but yet a hidden strength,
 Which if heav'n gave it, may be term'd her own:

'Tis chastity, my brother, chastity:

She that has that, is clad in complete steel,

And like a quiver'd nymph with arrows keen

May trace huge forests and unharbour'd heaths,

Infamous hills, and sandy perilous wilds,

Where through the sacred rays of chastity,

No savage fierce, bandite, or mountaineer

Will dare to foil her virgin purity:

Yea there, where very desolation dwells

By grots, and caverns shagg'd with horrid shades,

She may pass on with unblench'd majesty,

Be it not done in pride, or in presumption.

Some say, no evil thing that walks by night,

In fog, or fire, by lake, or moorish fen,

Blue meager hag, or stubborn unlaid ghost,

That breaks his magic chains at curfew time,

No goblin, or swart fairy of the mine,

Hath hurtful power o'er true virginity.

Do ye believe me yet, or shall I call

Antiquity from the old schools of Greece

To testify the arms of chastity?

Hence had the huntress Dian her dread bow,

Fair silver-shafted queen, for ever chaste,

Wherewith the tam'd she brinded lions,
And spotted mountain pard, but set at nought
The frivolous bolt of Cupid; gods and men
Fear'd her stern frown, and she was queen o'th' woods.
What was the snaky-headed Gorgon shield
That wise Minerva wore, unconquer'd virgin,
Wherewith she freez'd her foes to congeal'd stone,
But rigid looks of chaste austerity,
And noble grace that dash'd brute violence
With sudden adoration and blank awe?
So dear to heav'n is faintly chastity,
That when a soul is found sincerely so,
A thousand liveried angels lacky her,
Driving far off each thing of sin and guilt,
And in clear dream, and solemn vision,
Tell her of things that no gross ear can hear,
Till oft converse with heav'nly habitants
Begin to cast a beam on th' outward shape,
The unpolluted temple of the mind,
And turns it by degrees to the soul's essence,
Till all be made immortal: But when lust,
By unchaste looks, loose gestures, and foul talk,
But most by lewd and lavish act of sin,
Lets in defilement to the inward parts,
The soul grows clotted by contagion,
Imbodies, and imbrutes, till she quite lose
The divine property of her first being.
Such are those thick and gloomy shadows damp
Oft seen in charnal vaults, and sepulchres,
Ling'ring and sitting by a new-made grave,
As loth to leave the body that it lov'd,
And link'd itself by carnal sensuality

To a degenerate and degraded state.

2 BRO. How charming is divine philosophy!
Not harsh, and crabbed, as dull fools suppose,
But musical as is Apollo's lute,
And a perpetual feast of nectar'd sweets,
Where no crude surfeit reigns.

ELD. BRO. List, list, I hear
Some far off hallow break the silent air.

2 BRO. Me thought so too; what should it be?

ELD. BRO. For certain
Either some one like us night-founder'd here,
Or else some neighbour woodman, or, at worst,
Some roving robber calling to his fellows.

2 BRO. Heav'n keep my sister! Again, again, and
Best draw, and stand upon our guard. [near;

ELD. BRO. I'll hallow;
If he be friendly, he comes well; if not,
Defence is a good cause, and heav'n be for us.

The attendant Spirit, habited like a shepherd.

That hallow I should know, what are you? speak.
Come not too near, you fall on iron stakes else. [again.

SPIR. What voice is that, my young lord? speak

2 BRO. O brother, 'tis my father's shepherd, sure.

ELD. BRO. Thyrsis? whose artful strains have oft
The huddling brook to hear his madrigal, [delay'd
And sweetn'd every muskrose of the dale.

How cam'st thou here, good swain? hath any ram
Slipt from the fold, or young kid lost his dam,
Or straggling weather the penn'd flock forsook?
How could'st thou find this dark sequester'd nook?

SPI. O my lov'd master's heir, and his next joy,
 I came not here on such a trivial toy
 As a stray'd ewe, or to pursue the stealth
 Of pilfering wolf; not all the fleecy wealth
 That doth enrich these downs, is worth a thought
 To this my errand, and the care it brought.
 But, O my virgin lady, where is she?
 How chance she is not in your company?

ELD. BRO. To tell thee sadly, shepherd, without blame
 Or our neglect, we lost her as we came.

SPIR. Ay me unhappy! then my fears are true.

ELD. BRO. What fears, good Thyrsis? prithee briefly

SPIR. I'll tell ye, 'tis not vain or fabulous, [shew.
 (Though so esteem'd by shallow ignorance)

What the sage poets, taught by the heavenly muse,
 Story'd of old in high immortal verse,

Of dire chimera's and enchanted isles,
 And rifted rocks whose entrance leads to hell;
 For such there be, but unbelief is blind.

Within the navel of this hideous wood,
 Immur'd in Cypress shades a forcerer dwells,
 Of Bacchus and of Circe born, great Comus,
 Deep skill'd in all his mother's witcheries;
 And here to every thirsty wanderer,
 By sly enticement gives his baneful cup,
 With many murmers mix'd, whose pleasing poison
 The visage quite transforms of him that drinks,
 And the inglorious likeness of a beast
 Fixes instead, unmoulding reason's mintage
 Character'd in the face; this have I learnt
 Tending my flocks hard by th' hilly crofts
 That brow this bottom glade, whence night by night

He and his monstrous rout are heard to howl
Like stabl'd wolves, or tygers at their prey,
Doing abhorred rites to Hecate
In their obscured haunts of inmost bowers.
Yet have they many baits, and guileful spells,
To enveigle and invite th' unwary sense
Of them that pass unweeting by the way.
This evening late, by then the chewing flocks
Had ta'en their supper on the savoury herb
Of knot-grass dew-besprent, and were in fold,
I sat me down to watch upon a bank
With ivy canopied, and interwove
With flaunting honey-suckle and began,
Wrapt in a pleasing fit of melancholy,
To meditate my rural minstrelsy,
Till fancy had her fill; but ere a close
The wonted rore was up amidst the woods,
And fill'd the air with barbarous dissonance;
At which I ceas'd, and listen'd them a while,
'Till an unusual stop of sudden silence
Gave respite to the drowsy flighted steeds,
That draw the litter of close curtain'd sleep;
At last a soft and solemn breathing sound
Rose like a steam of rich distill'd perfumes,
And stole upon the air, that even Silence
Was took ere she was ware, and wish'd she might
Deny her nature, and be never more
Still to be so displac'd. I was all ear,
And took in strains that might create a soul
Under the ribs of death: But O ere long
Too well I did perceive it was the voice
Of my most honour'd lady, your dear sister.

Amaz'd I stood, harrow'd with grief and fear,
 And O poor hapless nightingale, thought I,
 How sweet thou sing'st, how near the deadly snare!
 Then down the lawns I ran with headlong haste,
 Through paths and turnings oft'n trode by day,
 Till guided by mine ear I found the place
 Where that damn'd wifard hid in fly disguise,
 (For so by certain signs I knew) had met
 Already, ere my best speed could prevent,
 'The aidless innocent lady his wish'd prey,
 Who gently ask'd if he had seen such two,
 Supposing him some neighbour villager.
 Longer I durst not stay, but soon I guess'd
 Ye were the two she meant, with that I sprung
 Into swift flight, till I had found you here,
 But further I know not.

2 BRO. O night and shades,
 How are ye join'd with hell in triple knot
 Against th' unarmed weakness of one virgin
 Alone, and helpless! Is this the confidence
 You gave me, brother?

ELD. BRO. Yes, and keep it still,
 Lean on it safely; not a period
 Shall be unaid for me: Against the threats
 Of malice or of forcery, or that pow'r
 Which erring men call chance, this I hold firm,
 Virtue may be assail'd, but never hurt,
 Surpris'd by unjust force, but not inthrall'd;
 Yea even that which mischief meant most harm,
 Shall in the happy trial prove most glory;
 But evil on itself shall back recoil,
 And mix no more with goodness, when at last

Gather'd like scum, and settl'd to itself,
 It shall be in eternal restless change
 Self-fed, and self-consum'd ; if this fail,
 The pillar'd firmament is rottenness,
 And earth's base built on stubble. But come let's on.
 Against th' opposing will and arm of heav'n
 May never this just sword be lifted up,
 But for that damn'd magician, let him be girt
 With all the grisly legions that troop
 Under the footy flag of Acheron,
 Harpyes and Hydra's, or all the monstrous forms
 'Twixt Africa and Ind, I'll find him out,
 And force him to restore his purchase back,
 Or drag him by the curls to a foul death,
 Curs'd as his life.

SPIR. Alas ! good vent'rous youth,
 I love thy courage yet, and bold emprise ;
 But here thy sword can do thee little stead ;
 Far other arms and other weapons must
 Be those that quell the might of hellish charms :
 He with his bare wand can unthred thy joints,
 And crumble all thy sinews.

ELD. BRO. Why prithee, shepherd,
 How durst thou then thyself approach so near,
 As to make this relation ?

SPIR. Care and utmost shifts
 How to secure the lady from surprisal,
 Brought to my mind a certain shepherd lad,
 Of small regard to see to, yet well skill'd
 In every virtuous plant and healing herb
 That spreads her verdant leaf to th' morning ray :
 He lov'd me well, and oft would beg me sing,

Which when I did, he on the tender grass
Would sit, and hearken even to extasy,
And in requital ope his leathern scrip,
And shew me simples of a thousand names,
Telling their strange and vigorous faculties :
Amongst the rest a small unsightly root,
But of divine effect, he cull'd me out ;
The leaf was darkish, and had prickles on it,
But in another country, as he said,
Bore a bright golden flow'r, but not in this soil :
Unknown, and like esteem'd, and the dull swain
Treads on it daily with his clouted shoon ;
And yet more med'cinal is it than that moly
That Hermes once to wife Ulysses gave ;
He call'd it Haemony, and gave it me,
And bad me keep it as of sov'reign use
'Gainst all enchantments, mildew, blast, or damp,
Or gastly furies apparition :
I purs'd it up, but little reck'ning made,
Till now that this extremity compell'd :
But now I find it true ; for by this means
I knew the foul inchanter though disguis'd,
Enter'd the very lime-twigs of his spells,
And yet came off: If you have this about you,
(As I will give you when we go) you may
Boldly assault the necromancer's hall ;
Where if he be, with dauntless hardihood,
And brandish'd blade rush on him, break his glass,
And shed the luscious liquor on the ground,
But seize his wand ; though he and his curst crew
Fierce sign of battle make, and menace high,
Or like the sons of Vulcan vomit smoke,

Yet will they soon retire, if he but shrink.

• ELD. BRO. Thyrsis, lead on a pace, I'll follow thee,
And some good angel bear a shield before us.

The scene changes to a stately palace, set out with all manner of deliciousness : Soft music, tables spread with all dainties. Comus appears with his rabble, and the lady set in an enchanted chair, to whom he offers his glass, which she puts by, and goes about to rise.

COMUS. Nay, lady, sit ; if I but wave this wand,
Your nerves are all chain'd up in alabaster,
And you a statute, or as Daphne was,
Root-bound, that fled Apollo.

LA. Fool, do not boast,
Thou canst not touch the freedom of my mind
With all thy charms, although this corporeal rind
Thou hast immanacl'd, while heav'n sees good.

CO. Why are you vex'd, lady ? Why do you frown ?
Here dwell no frowns, nor anger, from these gates
Sorrow flies far : See here be all the pleasures
That fancy can beget on youthful thoughts,
When the fresh blood grows lively, and returns
Brisk as the April buds in primrose-season.
And first behold this cordial julep here,
That flames and dances in his crystal bounds
With sp'rits of balm, and fragrant syrups mix'd.
Not that Nepenthes which the wife of Thone
In Egypt gave to Jove-born Helena,
Is of such power to stir up joy as this,
To life so friendly, or so cool to thirst.
Why should you be so cruel to yourself,

And to those dainty limbs which nature lent
For gentle usage, and soft delicacy ?
But you invert the cov'nants of her trust,
And harshly deal like an ill borrower
With that which you receiv'd on other terms,
Scorning the unexempt condition
By which all mortal frailty must subsist,
Refreshment after toil, ease after pain,
'That have been tir'd all day without repast,
And timely rest have wanted ; but, fair virgin,
This will restore all soon.

LA. 'Twill not, false traitor,
'Twill not restore the truth and honesty
That thou hast banish'd from thy tongue with lies.
Was this the cottage, and the safe abode
Thou told'st me of ? What grim aspects are these,
These ugly-headed monsters ? Mercy guard me !
Hence with thy brew'd enchantments, foul deceiver ;
Hast thou betray'd my credulous innocence
With visor'd falsehood, and base forgery ?
And would'st thou seek again to trap me here
With liquorish baits fit to ensnare a brute ?
Were it a draft for Juno when she banquets,
I would not taste thy treasonous offer ; none
But such as are good men can give good things,
And that which is not good, is not delicious
To a well-govern'd and wise appetite.

Co. O foolishness of men ! that lend their ears
To those budge doctors of the Stoic fur,
And fetch their precepts from the Cynic tub,
Praising the lean and fallow abstinence.
Wherefore did nature pour her bounties forth,

With such a full and unwithdrawing hand,
Covering the earth with odors, fruits, and flocks,
Thronging the seas with spawn innumerable,
But all to please and fate the curious taste?
And set to work millions of spinning worms,
That in their green shops weave the smooth-hair'd silk
To deck her sons, and that no corner might
Be vacant of her plenty, in her own loins
She hutch'd th' all-worshipp'd ore, and precious gems,
To store her children with; if all the world
Should in a pet of temp'rance feed on pulse,
Drink the clear stream, and nothing wear but freize,
Th' all-giver would be unthank'd, would be unprais'd,
Not half his riches known, and yet despis'd,
And we should serve him as a grudging master,
As a penurious niggard of his wealth,
And live like nature's bastards, not her sons,
Who would be quite furcharg'd with her own weight,
And strangl'd with her waste fertility;
Th' earth cumber'd, and the wing'd air dark'd with
The herds would over-multitude their lords, [plumes,
The sea o'erfraught would swell, and th' unsought
Would so emblaze the forehead of the deep, [diamonds
And so bestud with stars, that they below
Would grow inur'd to light, and come at last
To gaze upon the sun with shameless brows.
List lady, be not coy, and be not cosen'd
With that same vaunted name virginity.
Beauty is nature's coin, must not be hoarded,
But must be current, and the good thereof
Consists in mutual and partaken blifs,
Unfav'ry in th' enjoyment of itself;

If you let slip time, like a neglected rose
It withers on the stalk with languish'd head.
Beauty is nature's brag, and must be shown
In courts, in feasts, and high solemnities,
Where most may wonder at the workmanship;
It is for homely features to keep home,
They had their name hence; coarse complexions
And checks of sorry grain will serve to ply
The sampler, and to tease the housewife's wool.
What need a vermil-tinctur'd lip for that,
Love-darting eyes, or tresses like the morn?
There was another meaning in these gifts,
Think what, and be advis'd, you are but young yet.

L.A. I had not thought to have unlock'd my lips
In this unhallow'd air, but that this jugler,
Would think to charm my judgment, as mine eyes,
Obtruding false rules, pranck'd in reason's garb.
I hate when vice can bolt her arguments,
And virtue has no tongue to check her pride.
Impostor, do not charge most innocent nature,
As if she would her children should be riotous
With her abundance; she, good caterers,
Means her provision only to the good,
That live according to her sober laws,
And holy dictate of spare temperance:
If every just man, that now pines with want
Had but a moderate and befitting share
Of that which lewdly-pamper'd luxury
Now heaps upon some few with vast excess,
Nature's full blessings would be well dispens'd,
In unsuperfluous even proportion,
And she no whit encumber'd with her store,

And then the giver would be better thank'd,
His praise due paid; for swinish gluttony
Ne'er looks to heav'n amidst his gorgeous feast,
But with befotted base ingratitude
Crams, and blasphemes his feeder. Shall I go on?
Or have I said enough? To him that dares
Arm his profane tongue with contemptuous words
Against the sun-clad power of chastity,
Fain would I something say, yet to what end?
Thou hast nor ear nor soul to apprehend
The sublime notion, and high mystery,
That must be utter'd to unfold the sage
And serious doctrine of virginity,
And thou art worthy that thou should'st not know
More happiness than this thy present lot.
Enjoy your dear wit, and gay rhetoric,
That hath so well been taught her dazzling fence;
Thou art not fit to hear thyself convinc'd;
Yet should I try, the uncontrolled worth
Of this pure cause would kindle my rapt spirits
To such a flame of sacred vehemence,
That dumb things would be mov'd to sympathize,
And the brute earth would lend her nerves, and shake,
Till all thy magic structures rear'd so high,
Were shatter'd into heaps o'er thy false head.

Co. She fables not, I feel that I do fear
Her words set off by some superior power;
And though not mortal, yet a cold shudd'ring dew
Dips me all o'er, as when the wrath of Jove
Speaks thunder, and the chains of Erebus
To some of Saturn's crew. I must dissemble
And try her yet more strongly. Come, no more,

This is mere moral babble, and direct
 Against the canon laws of our foundation ;
 I must not suffer this ; yet 'tis but the lees
 And settlings of a melancholy blood :
 But this will cure all strait, one sip of this
 Will bathe the drooping spirits in delight
 Beyond the bliss of dreams. Be wise and taste.---

*The brothers rush in with swords drawn, wrest his
 glass out of his hand, and break it against the ground ;
 his rout make sign of resistance, but are all driven
 in ; the attendant Spirit comes in.*

SPIR. What, have you let the false enchanter 'scape ?
 O ye mistook, ye should have snatch'd his wand
 And bound him fast ; without his rod revers'd,
 And backward mutters of dislevering power,
 We cannot free the lady that sits here
 In stony fetters fix'd, and motionless :
 Yet stay, be not disturb'd, now I bethink me,
 Some other means I have which may be us'd,
 Which once of Meliboeus old I learn'd,
 'The foothest shepherd that ere pip'd on plains.

There is a gentle nymph not far from hence,
 That with moist curb sways the smooth Severn stream,
 Sabrina is her name, a virgin pure ;
 Whilom she was the daughter of Locrine,
 That had the scepter from his father Brute.
 She, guiltless damsel, flying the mad pursuit
 Of her enraged stepdame Guendolen,
 Commended her fair innocence to the flood
 That stay'd her flight with his cross-flowing course.
 The water nymphs that in the bottom play'd,

Held up their pearled wrists and took her in,
 Bearing her strait to aged Nereus hall,
 Who piteous of her woes, rear'd her lank head,
 And gave her to his daughters to imbathe
 In nectar'd lavers strew'd with asphodil,
 And through the porch and inlet of each sense
 Drop'd in ambrosial oils till she reviv'd,
 And underwent a quick immortal change,
 Made goddess of the river; still she retains
 Her maid'n gentleness, and oft at eve
 Visits the herds along the twilight meadows,
 Helping all urchin blasts, and ill-luck-signs
 That the shrewd medling elf delights to make,
 Which she with precious viol'd liquors heals.
 For which the shepherds at their festivals
 Carrol her goodness loud in rustic lays,
 And throw sweet garland wreaths into her stream
 Of pansies, pinks, and gaudy daffadils.
 And, as the old swain said, she can unlock
 The clasping charm, and thaw the numming spell,
 If she be right invok'd in warbled song,
 For maidenhood she loves, and will be swift
 To aid a virgin, such as was herself,
 In hard-besetting need; this will I try,
 And add the power of some adjuring verse.

S O N G.

Sabrina fair,
Listen where thou art sitting
Under the glassy, cool, translucent wave,
In twisted braids of lillies knitting

The loose train of thy amber-dropping hair ;

Listen for dear honour's sake,

Goddeſs of the ſilver lake,

Listen and ſave.

Listen and appear to us

In name of great Oceanus,

By the earth-shaking Neptune's mace,

And Tethys' grave majestic pace,

By hoary Nereus' wrinkled look,

And the Carpathian wiſard's hook,

By ſcaly Triton's winding ſhell,

And old ſooth-faying Glaucus' ſpell,

By Leucothea's lovely hands,

And her ſon that rules the ſtrands,

By Thetis tinſel-flipper'd feet,

And the ſongs of Sirens ſweet,

By dead Parthenope's dear tomb,

And fair Ligea's golden comb,

Wherewith ſhe ſits on diamond rocks,

Sleeking her ſoft alluring locks,

By all the nymphs that nightly dance

Upon thy ſtreams with wily glance,

Riſe, riſe, and heave thy roſy head

From thy coral-paven bed,

And bridle in thy headlong-wave,

Till thou our ſummons answer'd have.

Listen and ſave.

Sabrina rises, attended by water-nymphs, and sings.

*By the rusby-fringed bank,
Where grows the willow and the osier dank,
My sliding chariot stays,
Thick set with agat, and the azurn sheen
Of turkis blue, and emerald green,
That in the channel strays ;
Whilst from off the waters fleet
Thus I set my printless feet
O'er the cowslip's velvet head,
That bends not as I tread ;
Gentle swain, at thy request
I am here.*

SPIR. Goddess dear,
We implore thy powerful hand
To undo the charmed band
Of true virgin here distressed,
Through the force, and through the wile
Of unblest inchanter vile.

SAB. Shepherd, 'tis my office best
To help insnared chastity :
Brightest lady look on me,
Thus I sprinkle on thy breast
Drops that from my fountain pure,
I have kept of precious cure,
Thrice upon thy fingers tip,
Thrice upon thy rubied lip,
Next this marble venom'd feat
Smear'd with gums of glutenous heat,
I touch with chaste palms moist and cold :

Now the spell hath lost his hold ;
And I must haste ere morning hour
To wait in Amphitrite's bow'r.

Sabrina descends, and the Lady rises out of her seat.

SPIR. Virgin daughter of Locrine,
Sprung of old Anchises line,
May thy brimmed waves for this
Their full tribute never miss
From a thousand petty rills,
That tumble down the snowy hills :
Summer drouth, or singed air
Never scorch thy tresses fair,
Nor wet October's torrent flood
Thy molten crystal fill with mud ;
May thy billows roll ashore
The beryl, and the golden ore,
May thy lofty head be crown'd
With many a tower and terrass round,
And here and there thy banks upon
With groves of myrrh, and cinnamon.

Come, lady, while heav'n lends us grace,
Let us flie this curst place,
Lest the forcerer us entice
With some other new device.
Not a waste, or needles found,
Till we come to holier ground ;
I shall be your faithful guide
Through this gloomy covert wide,
And not many furlongs thence
Is your father's residence,

Where this night are met in state
 Many a friend to gratulate
 His wish'd presence, and beside
 All the swains that near abide,
 With jigs, and rural dance resort;
 We shall catch them at their sport,
 And our sudden coming there
 Will double all their mirth and chear;
 Come let us haste, the stars grow high,
 But night sits monarch yet in the mid sky.

*The scene changes, presenting Ludlow town, and the
 President's castle; then come in country-dancers, af-
 ter them the attendant Spirit, with the two Brothers
 and the Lady.*

S O N G.

SPIR. *Back, shepherds, back, enough your play,
 Till next sun-shine holiday;
 Here be without duck or nod
 Other trippings to be trod
 Of lighter toes, and such court guise
 As Mercury did first devise
 With the mincing Dryades
 On the lawns, and on the leas.*

*This second Song presents them to their Father and
 Mother.*

*Noble Lord, and Lady bright,
 I have brought ye new delight,
 Here behold so goodly grown
 Three fair branches of your own;*

*Heav'n hath timely try'd their youth,
 Their faith, their patience, and their truth,
 And sent them here through hard assays
 With a crown of deathless praise,
 To triumph in victorious dance
 O'er sensual folly, and intemperance.*

The dances ended, the Spirit epiloguizes.

SPIR. To the ocean now I fly,
 And those happy climes that ly
 Where day never shuts his eye,
 Up in the broad fields of the sky :
 There I suck the liquid air
 All amidst the gardens fair
 Of Hesperus, and his daughters three
 That sing about the golden tree :
 Along the crisped shades and bowers
 Revels the spruce and jocund spring,
 The Graces, and the rosie-bosom'd Hours,
 Thither all their bounties bring ;
 That there eternal summer dwells,
 And west winds, with musky wing
 About the cedarn alleys fling
 Nard and Cassia's balmy smells.
 Iris there with humid bow,
 Waters the odorous banks, that blow
 Flowers of more mingled hue
 Than her purpled scarf can shew,
 And drenches with Elysian dew
 (List mortals, if your ears be true)

Beds of Hyacinth, and roses,
Where young Adonis oft reposes,
Waxing well of his deep wound
In slumber soft, and on the ground
Sadly sits th' Assyrian queen ;
But far above in spangled sheen
Celestial Cupid her fam'd son advanc'd,
Holds his dear Psyche sweet intranc'd,
After her wandring labours long,
Till free consent the gods among
Make her his eternal bride,
And from her fair unspotted side
Two blisful twins are to be born,
Youth and Joy ; so Jove hath sworn.

But now my task is smoothly done,
I can fly, or I can run
Quickly to the green earth's end,
Where the bow'd welkin slow doth bend,
And from thence can soar as soon
To the corners of the moon.

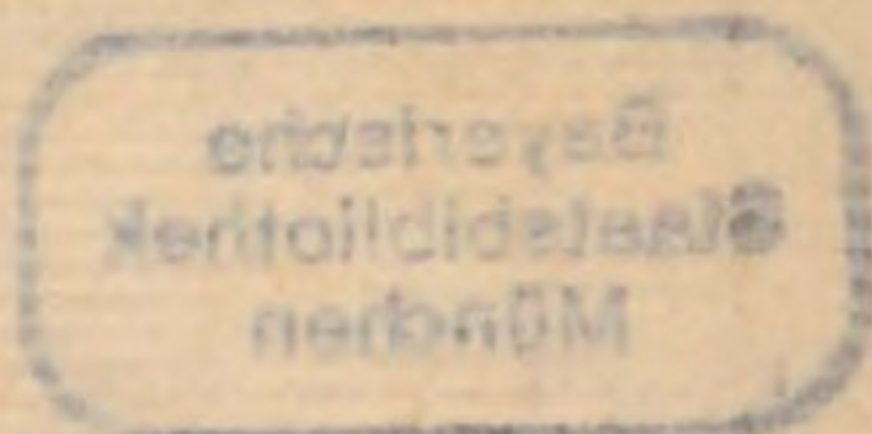
Mortals that would follow me,
Love virtue, she alone is free,
She can teach you how to clime
Higher than the sphery chime ;
Or if virtue feeble were,
Heav'n itself would stoop to her.

T H E E N D.

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beds of Hyacinths, and roses,
 Where young Adonis oft reposes,
 Winging well of his deep wound
 In thimble leaf, and on the ground
 Sadly sits the Aegyptian queen;
 But far above in spangled stream
 Celestial Cupid sat for a while,
 Holding his dear Psyche sweet in hand,
 After her wandering labours long,
 I'll free content the gods among
 Make her his eternal bride,
 And from her fair unpolluted lips
 Two blissful twins are to be born,
 Peace and Joy; to love shall bloom
 But now my task is almost done,
 I can fly, or I can run
 Quickly to the great earth's end,
 Where the bow'd welkin flows both hand,
 And from thence can bear as soon
 To the corners of the moon.
 Moments that would follow me,
 Love virtue, the alone is free,
 She can teach you how to climb
 Higher than the sperry chime;
 Or if virtue feeble were,
 Heaven itself would stoop to her.

Y H E E W D.





Milton, John,

Paradise Regain'd A Poem, In Four Books ; To which is added, Samson
Agonistes, And Comus, A Mask

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